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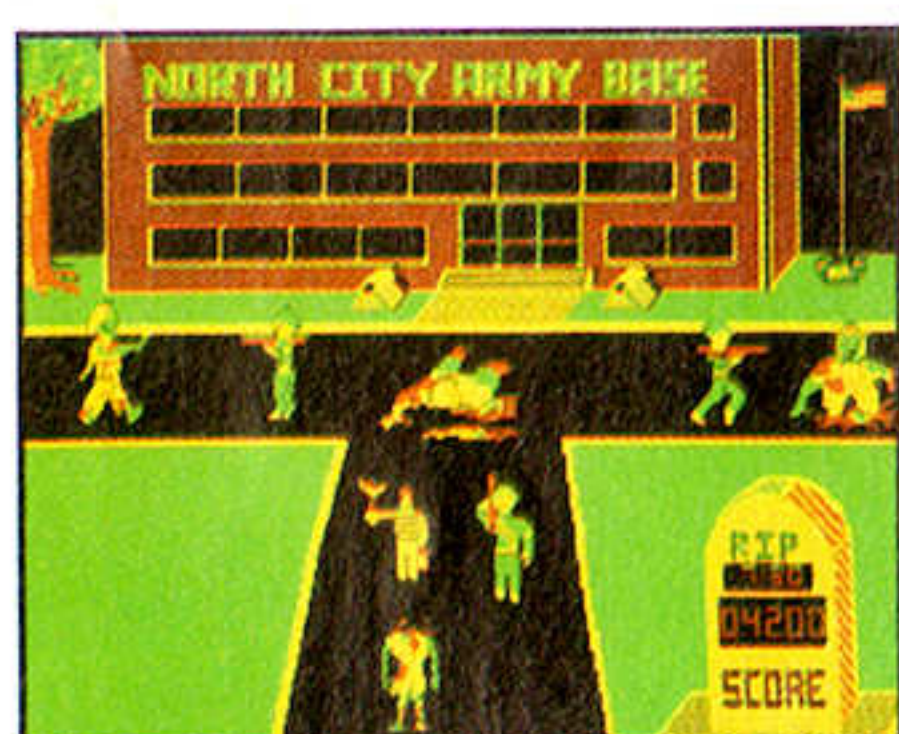
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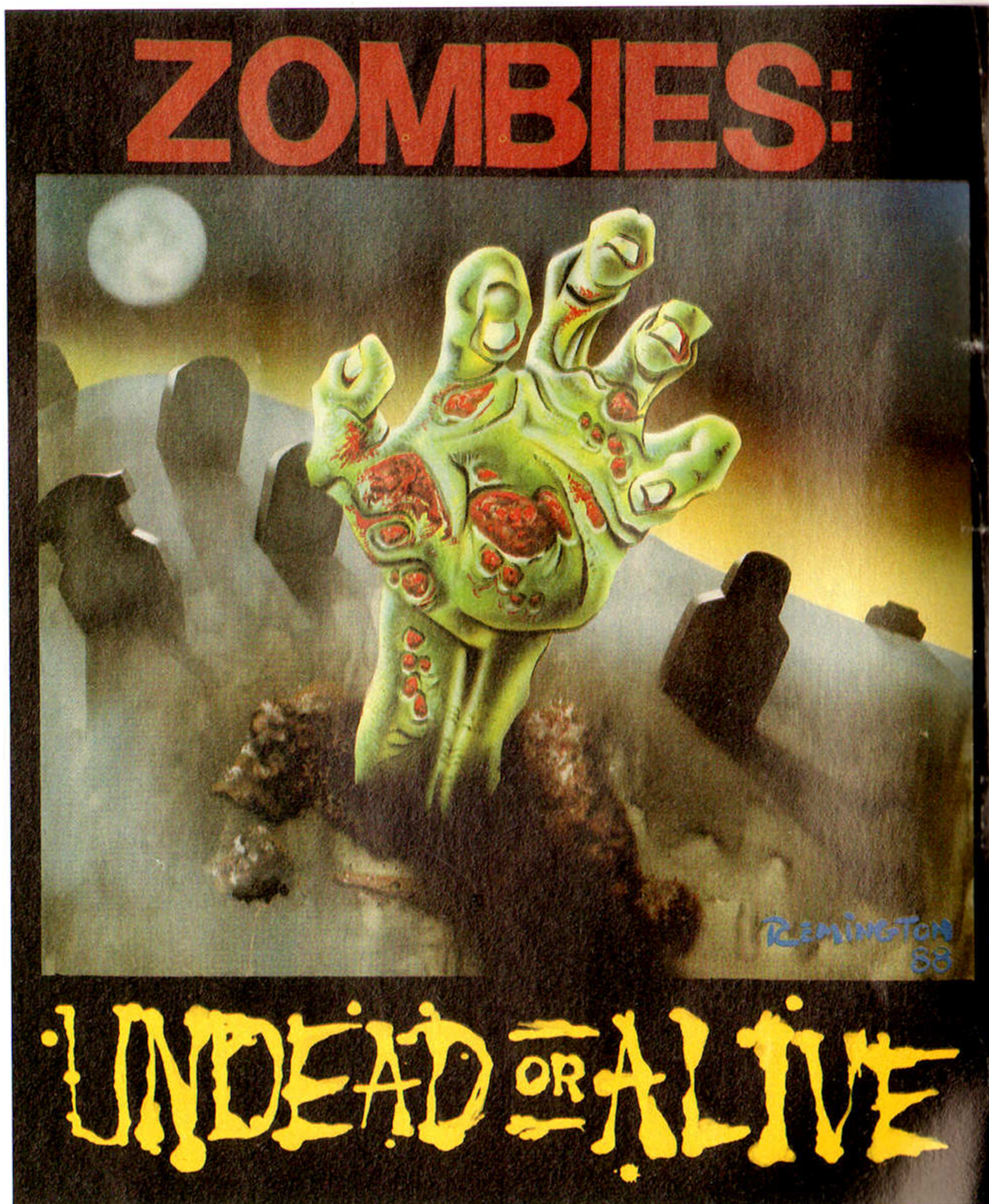
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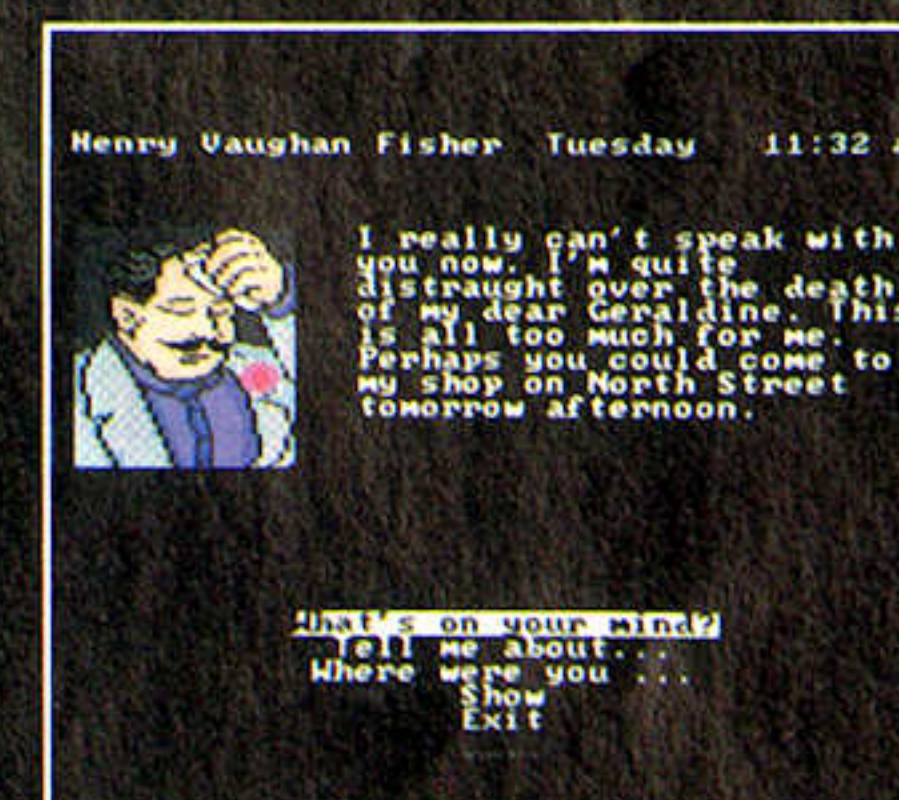
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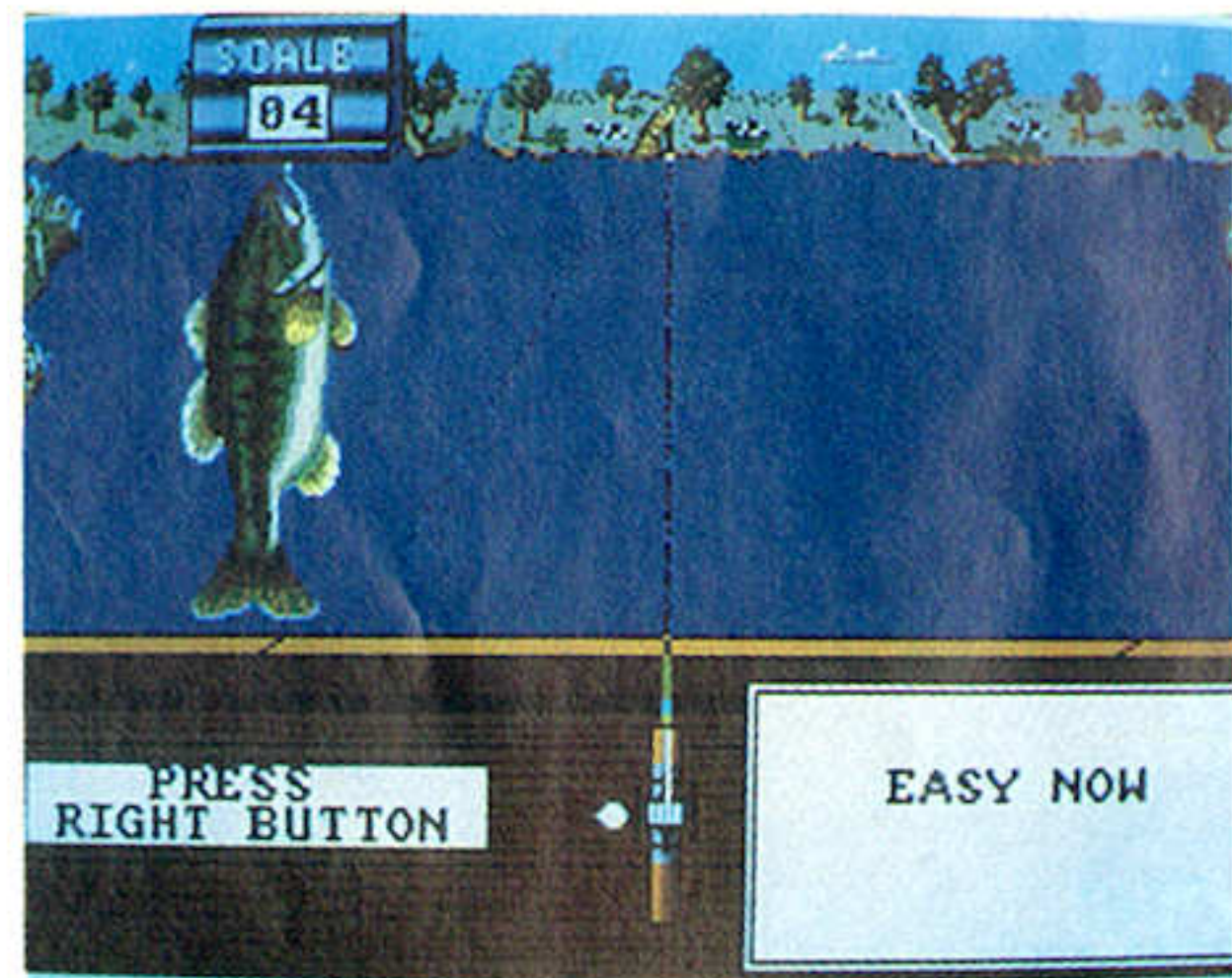
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RoboCop an experiment with the advancement of man and machine. See page 8.

Industry News & Views

By **Rusel DeMaria**

In the aftermath of CES, things are relatively quite, but behind that apparent lull, there's constant development going on, and lots of new games are in the works. In a recent trip, I saw the seeds of some exciting new games, but had to promise not to tell. However, game development continues to evolve, and the games you will see by next fall or so will be very exciting.

Anyway, to the current batch of introductions:

Lucasfilm Games handed me a nice bit of information. It seems that coincident with the release of the next Indiana Jones movie, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade there will be two games. That's right, two. One is going to be **Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Action Game** and the other will be **Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure**. According to Lucasfilm spokesman, Doug Glen, "The frustration in developing a game from a movie is having to compromise between complexity and detail and the need for action. So rather than compromise, what we have done is to build the best possible version of each game". According to Doug, the action game will contain computerized versions of action sequences from the movie, while the graphic adventure will let you follow the story just as Indy does, but with some additions. This may mark the first time a movie production company has released a computer game (in this case, two games) at the same time that they released the movie.

Another game I saw in development was **Vette** from Spectrum Holobyte. This driving simulation game benefits from Spectrum's technological achievements with **Falcon** and their other simulations. What I saw was still being developed, but it looked smooth and very exciting. The game will take place in the streets of San Francisco. You'll be able to drive along several realistically portrayed routes, dodging SF traffic and passing through a 3D representation of the city streets and buildings. I suppose, as an added benefit, you'll be able to learn how to get from here to there in San

Francisco, and perhaps there will be other city disks to come, so we can learn to drive in other cities, as well.

Mindscape is planning a summer release for a new Chris Crawford game called **Guns and Butter**. In this game of economics, you must balance your budget between defense and food production. Guns and Butter will be coming out first on the Macintosh, then on the PC. Also coming from Mindscape will be **Star Trek: The Final Frontier** (for PC and Mac) which is being developed by David Smith, the developer of **The Colony**. And, from England, Mindscape will be distributing **Speedball**, a violent roller skating game that features a metal ball in a metal arena. Look for that one in June on several formats. Finally, Mindscape has announced plans to introduce three new Sega titles on home computer formats: **Shinobi**, **Action Fighter** and **Afterburner**.

Marvel Comic characters are making it into the computer game world with titles featuring such notables as **Spiderman** and **X-Men**. In the latest announcement, Mastertronic is planning an arcade game that features the **Silver Surfer**, first for the Coin-Op games to be followed by PC versions.

Electronic Arts is busy as usual. Look for **Zany Golf** for Amiga, Abrams **Battle Tank** for the PC, **Kings of the Beach: Professional Beach Volleyball** for the PC and Amiga, **John Madden Football** for the Apple II, **Modem Wars** for the PC, **Legacy of the Ancients** for the PC, and more. Kings of the Beach looks like a fun game with realistic player action and plenty of strategy. Madden Football, though slightly hampered by the limitations of the Apple screen resolution, is a powerful and very versatile simulation of the game of football, and includes real playbooks from Madden's days as coach of the Oakland Raiders. **Chuck Yeager 2.0** features several improvements, including much more interesting scenery, four new planes, new camera angles to view your plane from, new race courses and the

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Editor's Page

Expanding Territory

HELLO JAPAN, AUSTRALIA, HOLLAND, PANAMA, MALASIA, THAILAND, PUERTO RICO, MEXICO, BRAZIL, GERMANY AND SOUTH AFRICA.

Starting this month, COMPUTER PLAY becomes licensed for the distribution in these eleven additional countries. We wish to welcome the thousands of new readers to our evergrowing family. COMPUTER PLAY is the largest circulated game reviewing magazine in the world and we hope you all enjoy our magazine for years to come. COMPUTER PLAY MAGAZINE reviews all games in all formats. We tell it like it is, if a game is great we will tell you. If a game is bad, we will tell you that too! Our responsibility is to you, and not to the game manufacturer. Games are expensive and it is our responsibility to help you spend your money wisely. The game manufacturers both hate us and love us. If they receive a good review they know they will make money. If the review is bad, they know most likely they will have a dud on their hands. That is why, in many cases, the game manufacturers send us a pre-released copy of the game they intend to market. They then wait for us to review it before they spend tens of thousands of dollars in manufacturing and distribution costs. If they receive a favorable review, the game will then be manufactured. If the review is bad, then its back to the drawing board. With the additions this month of both Japan and Australia we will be adding two new international game reviewers, Adam Yamamoto for the coverage of the Japanese game releases, and Richard Riske to cover the Australian games. These two countries are releasing games almost on a daily basis and now that COMPUTER PLAY MAGAZINE will also be sold in these two countries at all computer, book and news stores. It has now become mandatory that we have

our own staff present in these two game playing oriented countries. The reader will have the benefit of receiving information on many games before distribution in the United States. At the same time the foreign reader will now have the opportunity to see what the United States has to offer in the field of game manufacturing.

Speaking of game manufacturing, 1989 will be the biggest year yet for the availability of games in all formats. The days are gone when games were produced for only one machine. Most manufacturers now release games immediately in all formats or within weeks of one another. The days of Commodore, Apple, or IBM formats only, are gone. The avid game player doesn't have to own several different hardware machines any more, he can just own the machine he likes, and chances are most games would be available. Most computer software manufacturers are also licensing their games now to third party licensees for Nintendo, or Atari, so many of the games are now becoming available for the ever popular cartridge systems. The cartridge systems are also in the process of becoming more sophisticated so very soon basically all computer software games will eventually be made available for play on the various cartridge systems. (Nintendo, NEC, Atari, Sega). Technology in the game playing world is now unbelievable and the devoted game player has a bright and enthusiastic future of fun to look forward to. Well, it's time for us to brush up on our Japanese and German and once again welcome to the thousands of new readers to COMPUTER PLAY MAGAZINE.

Letters & hints

Send letters to the editor to: Computer Play, 3321 W. Dempster, Skokie, IL 60076

Tips on Times of Lore

I recently finished Origin's Times of Lore game and thought that your readers might appreciate a few hints and tricks for finishing the quest.

1) To purchase the Magic Axe, go to the town of Lankwell and enter the building in the NNW corner. If no one is home, wait for them to arrive. Upon meeting them, immediately choose the "speak" command and they will offer to sell you the axe, which automatically returns to you hand after each use (unlike the dagger, which you must go and pick up after each use). The axe makes combat MUCH easier and faster.

2) To enter Heidric's castle in Ganestor, go to that town's inn and enter the cellar. There is a small, barely visible lever on the north wall. Bump into it and a secret stairway to the castle basement will be revealed. The Tablet of Truth is on the ground floor of the castle, toward the center. Avoid engaging any guards, as you will need to return here later in the game to speak with Heidric. Before returning the Tablet to the Regent "Use" it and choose "High King".

3) The Temple of Angar can only be entered by using the Chime found in the dungeon beneath the blasted crater. The key to this dungeon must be obtained from the Archmage in the cottage that lies north of the bridge above the Enchanted forest. You will need to perform a service for another character in the game before the mage will give it to you, though.

4) The Grey Abbott can only be destroyed by using a Sphere found on the upper level of the temple. Enter the temple (using the chime), go upstairs and enter the bedroom. Use the "Examine" command and then "Pick Up" the Sphere. Go downstairs, walk up to the Abbott's throne, and "Use" the Sphere. It would be a VERY good idea to pick up the item the Abbot leaves behind!

Dave Gentzler
Thomasville, PA

Needs More Hints

When I received my first issue of COMPUTER PLAY I thought, "This is going to supply me with all of the hints I need". But I keep flipping through your magazine and find not one hint!

Anyway, could you do a review on Space Quest 3 by Sierra, Online, please?

Also, please tell me where to go or what to do after I get out of the sewers on Manhunter-New York. Can you please help me?

Elton Lin
Franklin Lakes, NJ

Although some of our past issues may not have contained many hints, Elton, we are receiving more and more as time goes by. Hang in there!

Satisfied Reader

Congratulations on a job well done! You are publishing one of the few magazines that dedicates itself to computer games (I have seen your section on Nintendo games and I see no need for it). I really enjoy your magazine and would like to see more coming.

I am so pleased that I have decided to subscribe. I am very happy to take advantage of your free game offer included with the subscription.

I hope to see MORE games reviewed on the Apple IIGS. I have read your December issue with the Platoon review. The review was very informative and if I have the chance again, I will buy the game.

Keep up the good work!

Bryan Krush
Stevens Point, WI

You're Right

I have always felt that writing to a magazine was a gross waste of time. But as soon as I read my first issue, I just had to tell you how great the magazine is! This is just what I've been waiting for! COMPUTER PLAY is right up my alley, and without a doubt the best computer game guide there is.

I have a few suggestions that will make a great thing better. Please get rid of all the spelling mistakes and include the omitted words. I feel that the poor editing is far below the quality of the material contained in your magazine.

One more thing I would very much like to see (and I'm sure I am not alone with this request) is that the computer used to test the program be indicated on the scorecard.

Great magazine! Very helpful and informative, keep up the good work!

Donald Papp
Anytown, USA

We apologize for typos and omitted words and can only tell you that we will try to do better in the future.

A Good Idea

Well, it's about time! I have subscribed to computer publications for years, but when I saw COMPUTER PLAY on the newsstand I could hardly believe that someone was finally addressing the one subject all the other magazines have ignored: the computer game buyer. I'd like to offer one suggestion, however.

The one item I wish you would include in the scorecard box at the end of your review is copy protection. For instance, after reading your review of John Elway's Quarterback, I ran out to buy a copy, but as soon as I found out that I could not run it from my hard drive, I put it back on the shelf. Regardless of how good a program is, I will not buy it if it runs on disks only. Most of the computer owners I know, feel the same way.

I clearly understand the need for copy protection of some form or another. The "key disk" type of protection is fine, since I am able to carry the key disks in my brief case and run the programs at home or in my office and yet not be able to give someone else an illegal copy, which I totally agree with. An even better form of protection is that used on Battlehawks 1942. I can run the program from my hard drive but I must identify a specific airplane shown on the screen from a likeness in the manual.

I realize that not everyone is as honest as I am about copying programs and that copy protection is here to stay, but maybe you could help some of us out by letting us know what form of protection the programs you review have.

Dave Burns
North Hollywood, CA

That's a good idea, Dave. In the future, we'll try to mention in each review what type of copy protection, if any, is employed by each game.

More Help for Kelly

Congratulations on producing such a beautiful magazine. Ever since the demise of Electronic Games and Computer Games, I thought that I would be doomed to only get maybe 1 or 2 reviews a month of the games that are out. Now, after discovering your magazine, I can find out what's new and what's good.

Your review of Carrier Command was top notch. I have been waiting a long time to find out what it was about. Unfortunately most of the stores aren't set up to allow you to try before you buy. When you get it home, if you don't like it then you are stuck with something

you don't like or you loose 20% to restocking fees. Thanks for the help.

I do have a comment, though: I have an Amiga 1000 and a Nintendo. I play both, a lot, but reviews of Nintendo games are a dime a dozen. Computer gaming reviews are very hard to come by. PLEASE, I like my Nintendo very much and a lot of the games I am addicted to, but we are drowning in Nintendo. MORE AMIGA, APPLE and IBM. Less Nintendo, Please.

Here is a tip on AAAARGH for the Amiga. When you have to battle the other monster for the prize egg, just hold the fire button down and push the joystick toward the monster. He'll never touch you!

Oh yeah, I almost forgot, when you do reviews on the games, could you please let us know what system you tested it on, or, test them on different systems and let us know the difference?

Chip Henson
Kissimmee, FL

Police Quest II Hints

I've fallen in love with your magazine. When CP arrives in the mail I put aside anything I'm doing and read it, cover to cover (even the fine print on the ads). But sometimes I cringe at mistakes, like when you placed the picture of Street Sports Baseball above the description for S S Football, in Snapshots 10/88. I know I might sound picky, but I think someone who just picked up this magazine might get the wrong impression. Well, enough of the criticism.

I have some basic hints for Sierra's new game, Police Quest II:

1. Look on the back of your business card, there are some numbers that will help you open your locker.

2. Once you get the new mug shot of bails at the jail, show it to everyone at the crime scenes and other places.

3. Take fingerprints on anything the criminal might of taken.

4. Go to the range first thing and adjust your sights, (the range of adjustment is about how far your gun moves when you hit a direction key, once) also the windage screw is for left and right movement, the elevation screw for height.

5. Respond to all radio calls and ALWAYS listen to the captain.

6. If you're running low on bullets, you can get extra clips from the man behind the desk at the range. You can also obtain ear protectors from this man and be sure to put them on before you fire a bullet at the range.

Keep up the monumental amount of good work you are doing.

Philip Winn
Ann Arbor, MI

Help Needed for Ultima IV

I have been playing Ultima IV for many months now and I am close to completion. However, for the past few weeks I have been getting increasingly frustrated for I have been unable to make any further progress. I am an eight parts Avatar and I have found all of the items needed to complete my quest, but there are two problems I am facing:

First, I only have seven members in my party. I can't seem to find a shepherd to join my party. Is one needed to complete the game, and if so, where can one be found? Second, I can't find the entrance to the Abyss. I have sailed to the Isle of the Abyss and defeated the Pirates who guard it, but once I set foot on land, all I do is wander about, unable to find any way into the Abyss.

I would greatly appreciate any help. I have already purchased Ultima V and I would like to begin playing it as soon as possible. Thanks.

Del Schneider
Ceres, CA

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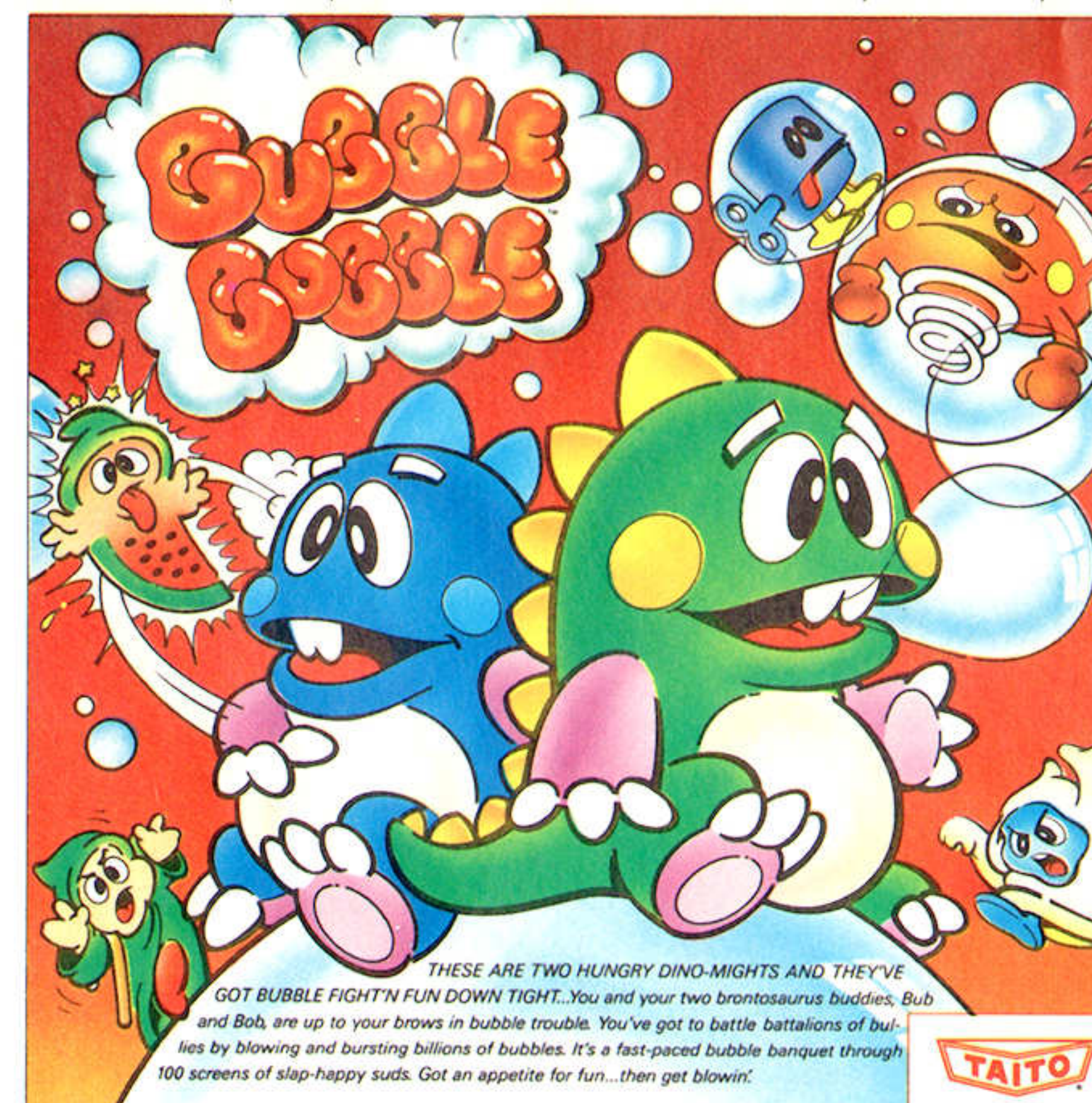


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Everyone is Out to Tag You



By D. Nathan Richardson

A lot of new computer games coming out now are based on hit movies. Everything from 'Alien' to 'Ghostbusters' has gone from the big screen to the computer monitor. The latest entry into this category of games is **RoboCop**. The game that asks the question, 'Is there anyone in this town not packing a piece and gunning for me?' The answer is NO! Everyone is out to tag you.

Like the movie, you are ninety percent mechanical and ten percent (your head) human. How much of that ten percent you use is critical to your survival. You are the last word in law enforcement and as such, you can weather gunfire that mere flesh and blood would not withstand. This proves helpful when everyone is shooting at you for fun. Everyone knows that a policeman's job is never done, and that is especially true if you're RoboCop.

As soon as you HEAR RoboCop, you find yourself on the mean streets of the old motor city. You cast your gaze down a deceptively

quite street that will soon be ablaze with gunfire. The government as we know it, has given up on the city of Detroit because it has become unmanageable. At this time private industry steps into the vacuum without the same restrictions that hinder elected officials. The corporation that fits this bill is O.C.P... The product that O.C.P. plans to use to win the war is a robot with human intelligence and superhuman firepower.

The game begins on a street scene that scrolls from left to right, that quickly becomes a shooting gallery, and you're the duck. The thing you have to make sure of is the angle of your shots. You must remember where the bad guys will show up so you can gain the advantage on them. Ducking and diagonal shooting are vital towards your advancing to the next screen. There is a time limit to meet and you must trash hoods along the way to get the things you need to survive. These things include food for extra life on the power bar and icons representing extra time on the clock and super firepower.

One of the best things about being RoboCop

is, you don't have to worry about filling out tiresome reports on every thug you kill. Even though you don't have to be bothered with such trivial matters, there are certain rules that you must live by. These rules are your prime directives and as such, are followed to the letter. The first three directives are easy; serve the public trust, uphold the law and protect the innocent. There is also a fourth directive that you will find out about as you progress thru the game.

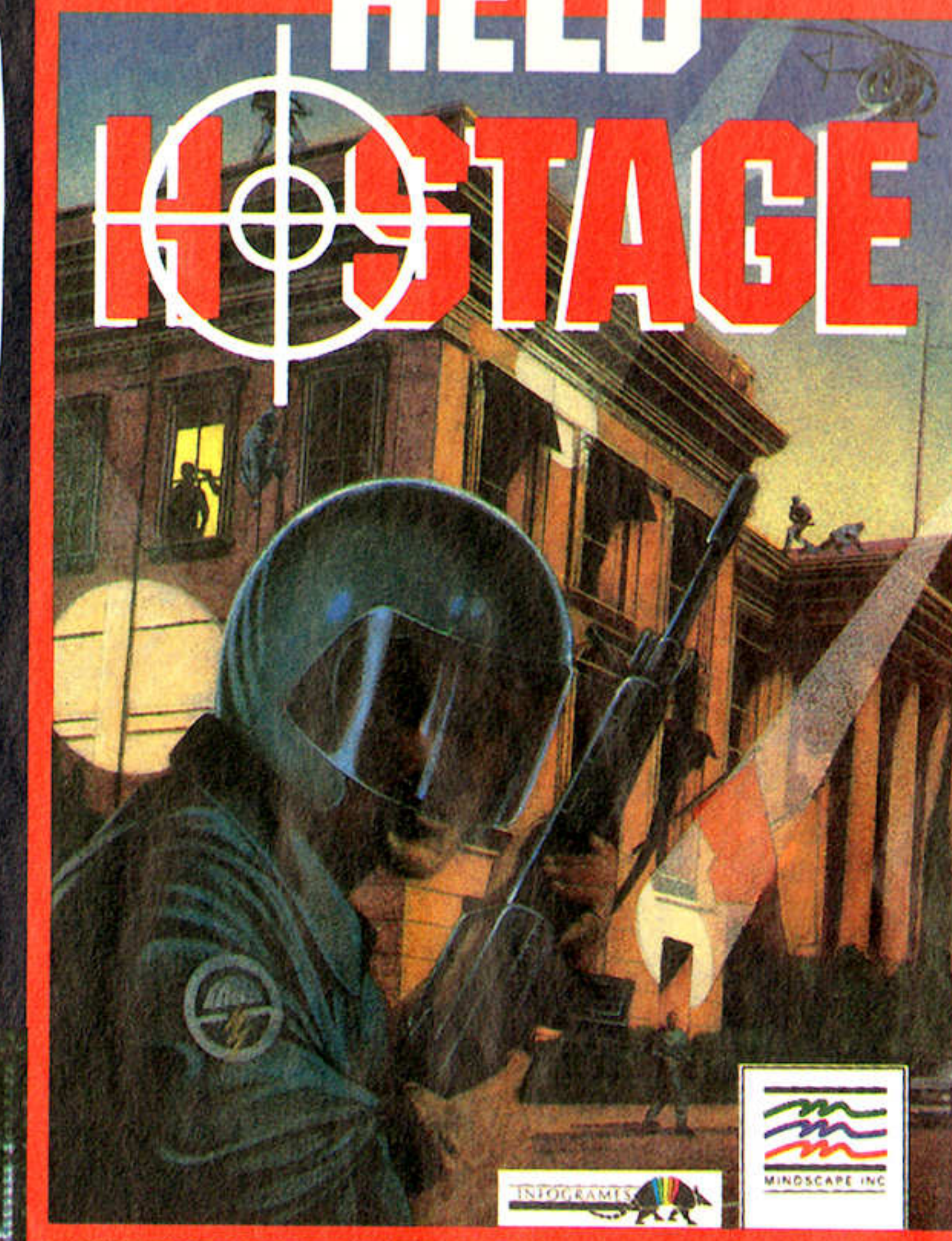
RoboCop has nine levels to go through, to finish the game. Some of the levels require different skills than others. Levels one and three are basically the same, a Detroit street scene that you must shoot your way through in a given amount of time or you will not be able to advance to the next screen. If you don't kill most of the thugs that you encounter along the way, you won't acquire the things you need to give you more time on the clock and special firepower to complete that stage of the game.

10 ►

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- Find the hostages; get them out safely



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Circle Reader Service Number 49.

The game has a story line like the movie. While you are cleaning up the streets of Detroit, a hostage situation develops where you have to free the victim. Some low-down creep is using an innocent bystander as a shield, you must shoot him dead without hitting the victim. The crook will have to be hit several times before he is dead. After you free the hostage, you have to go through the first screen all over again and get the rest of the hoods that you didn't get the first time.

The forth level of the game is back at police headquarters, where you must match up the profile of a criminal that recognizes you with the mugshots to get a record of him. There is a very brief time span to this level of the game so you must be fast.

When you match up the faces, the information provided by the records, gives you a lead. The information leads to an old warehouse where a drug lord has set up his headquarters for dealing cocaine and heroin throughout the entire Midwest region. This part of the game requires the same skills that you perfected on the first screen, but this time you have to go up

and down the screen instead of side to side. After you get past the drug lord's thugs, you get the drug lord himself to tell you who his employer is. To your amazement, you find out it is the Vice President of the O.C.P.

At the sixth level of the game, you confront the Vice President of the company, only to have that mystery directive get in the way. This level plays different from any other level in the game. Now you must go toe to toe with a killer robot that you can't shoot, but you can punch out. It will take several pops to knock it out, so you will need perfect timing to avoid it's shots.

The next two screens are the same and play like the first screen. Besides having to deal with all the usual thugs, there are also two more killer robots waiting for you. To get through this screen, you must kill a thug carrying a cobra gun, so you can turn it on the robots. The gun has a limited ammo supply so you must make every shot count.

The last screen of the game takes you to the boardroom where you once again confront the now fired Vice President of the O.C.P.. He has now taken the President of O.C.P. hostage. This part of the game is the same as level two, and as such you must shoot the guy who is

holding the hostage and not the hostage himself.

My overall view of this game is that it is fun to play and offers enough variety to keep you coming back for more. The graphics are great and play is smooth, making RoboCop as big a hit on the computer as it was in the theaters.

Name: ROBOCOP
Type: Arcade
Formats: C64/128
Publisher: Data East
Ages: 10 and above
Requirement: One disk drive & joystick
Players: One
Price: \$34.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Very Good (8)
Documentation: Very Good (8)
Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.5)
Realism: Excellent (9.5)
Playability: Excellent (9.5)

CP RATING: 9.28
Circle Reader Service Number 45.

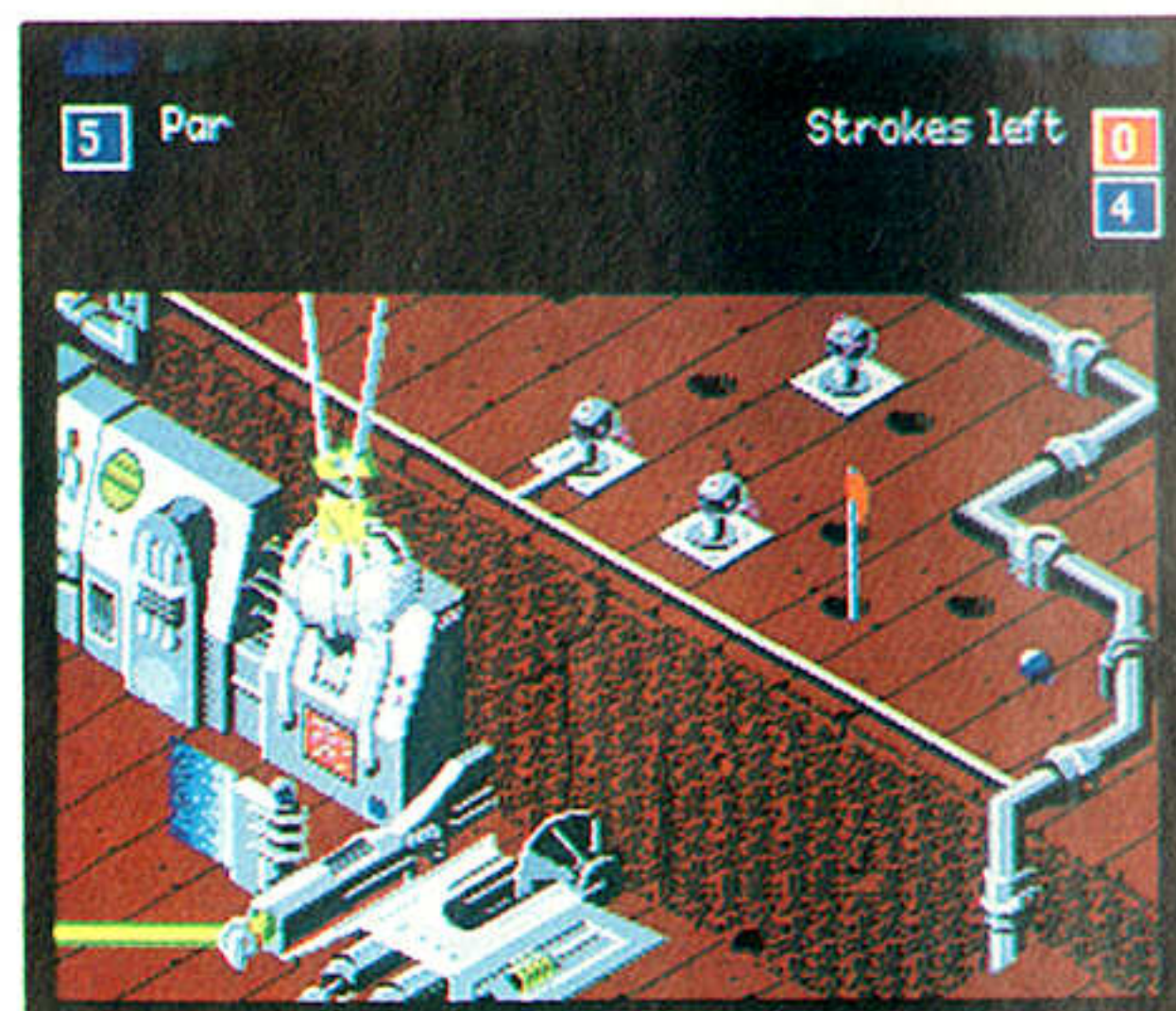
The Mondo-Bizarro Golf Game

By R. Bradley Andrews

Enjoy putt-putt golf? Have a liking for the bizarre? Well, now there is a game for you. **Zany Golf**, by Electronic Arts, contains a very interesting cross of themes from such diverse topics as putt-putt golf and travels through strange landscape reminiscent of Marble Madness. These two basic themes have been effectively mixed and brought to IBM PCs everywhere.

Zany Golf is played on an unusual mini course of nine holes, each of which features a different unique theme. The first hole, Windmill, is actually very similar to what might be seen on real life courses. Play is on two interconnected levels and it is worth your while to hit the ball into the windmill. But reality stops here. The next hole features a bouncing hamburger over the hole and a bottle of ketchup which spurts when hit. One hole is even in the form of a pinball machine, where you must knock down two targets and then get the ball into a hole in the playfield to get the ball into the real hole.

The object in Zany Golf is to remain under par and finish the course. Each hole has a rated par, and any shots left over after a hole are added to the total available for the next hole. If all nine holes are completed successfully, you will get a shot at a bonus "mystery" hole. Each



game begins with the first hole, and the player must master each hole in order. The game ends if the player runs out of shots and fails to stay below par. Herein lies a minor flaw. The first few holes must be repeated over and over to reach the later holes.

While the game can be controlled by the keyboard or a joystick, a mouse is far more preferred and allows for very accurate control. The EGA graphics are very well done and add to the feel of playing on this bizarre course. The sound, while following the theme, rapidly becomes tedious, and can, fortunately, be turned off. The game also uses a codewheel device for copy protection. Before playing the

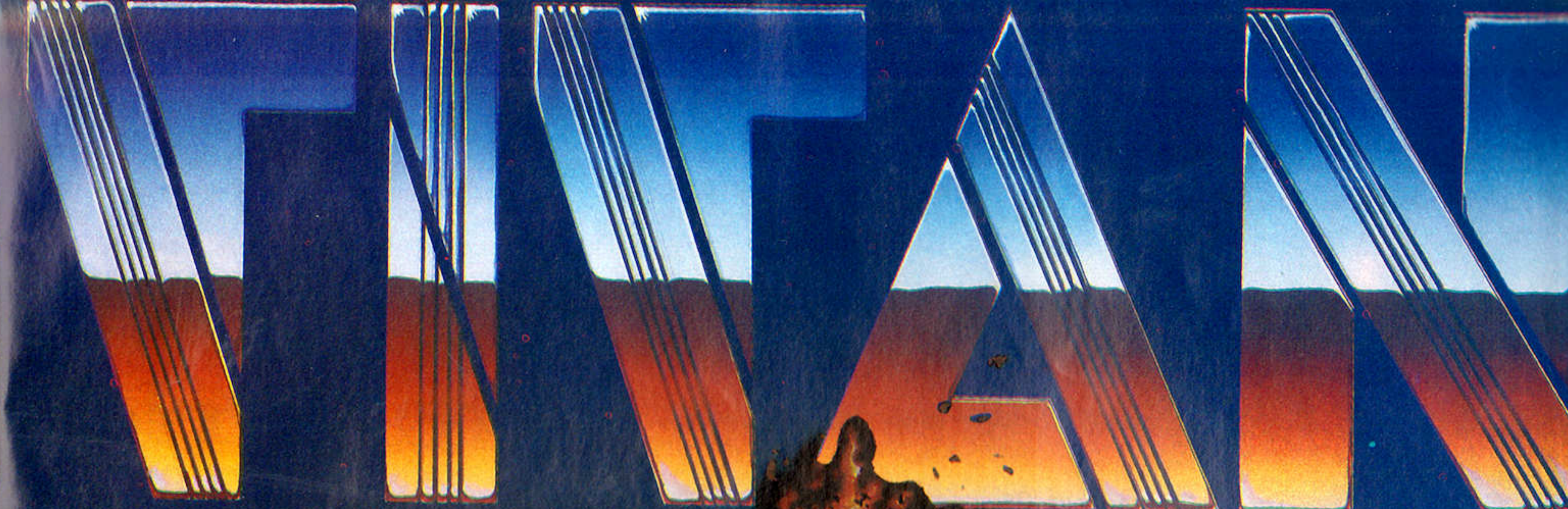
second hole you are given a word combination which you must match the wheel to and then enter the given number in. This is nice because it allows the game to be freely copied to a hard disk, but it is a drawback since it occurs every time the second hole is reached, likely many times during a playing session.

The folks at Electronic Arts have taken an interesting idea and produced a very playable and extremely enjoyable game.

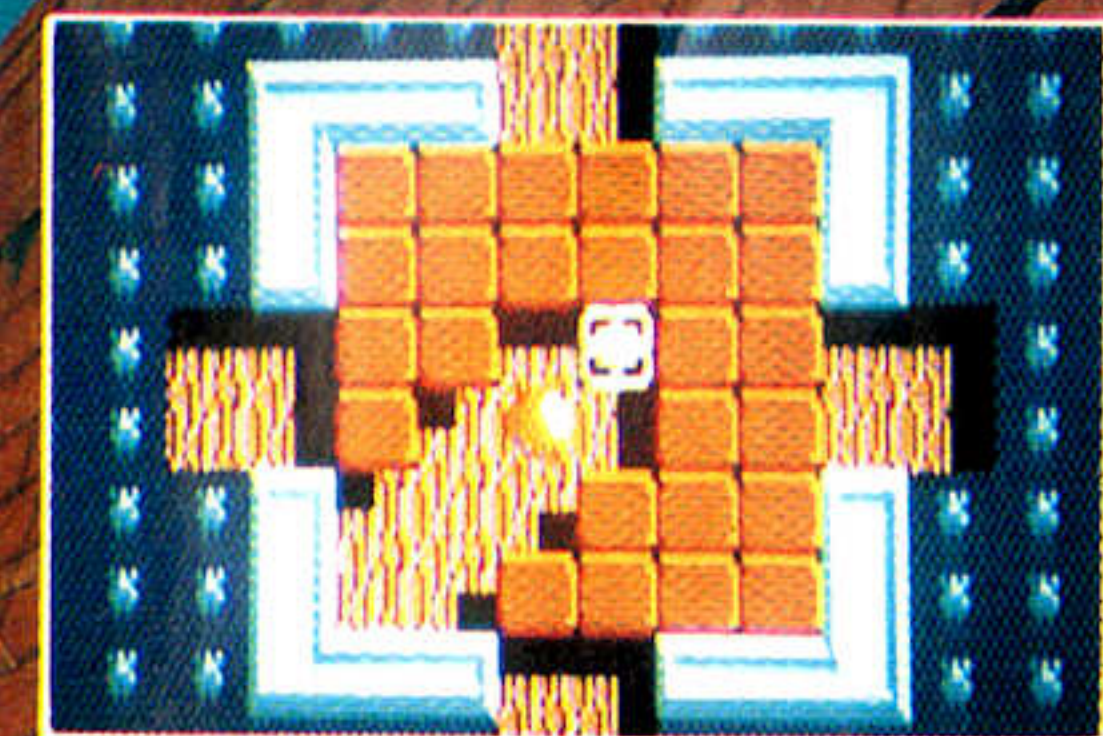
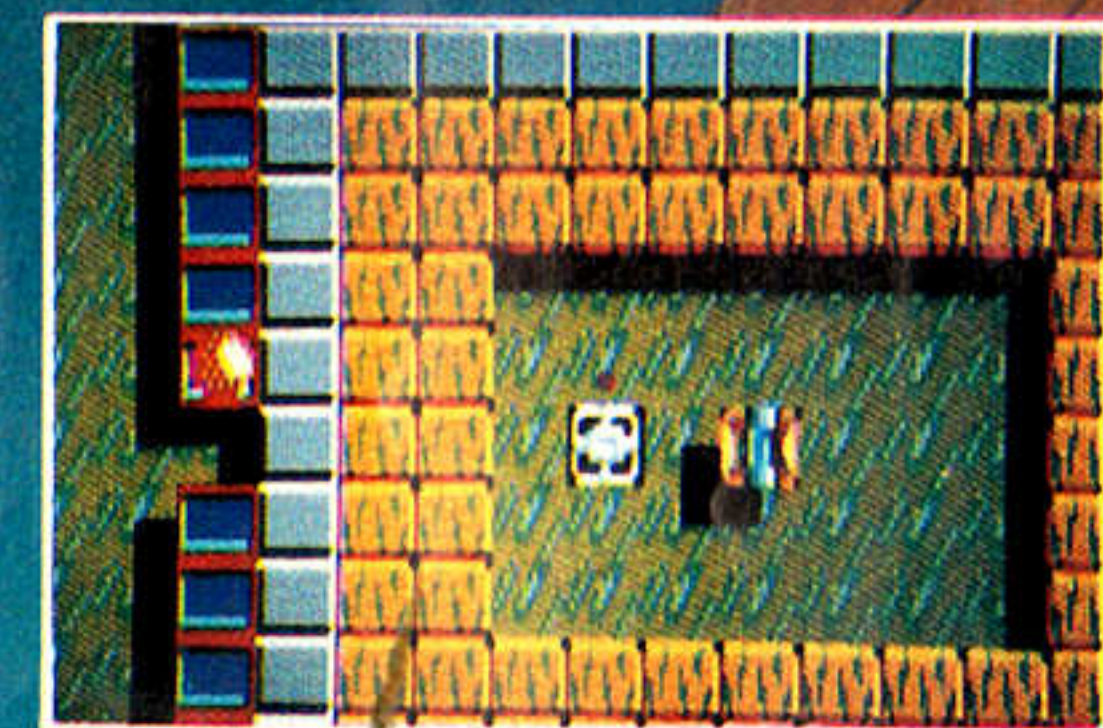
Name: ZANY GOLF
Type: Action Arcade
Formats: Apple IIGS, IBM, Atari ST, Amiga
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Designer: Will Harvey
Ages: 10 and above
Requirements: Mouse recommended
Players: One to Four
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level: Beginner-Advanced
Packaging: Very Good (7)
Documentation: Average (6)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (8.5)
Realism: Very Good (8)
Playability: Very Good (7.5)

CP RATING: 7.48
Circle Reader Service Number 32.



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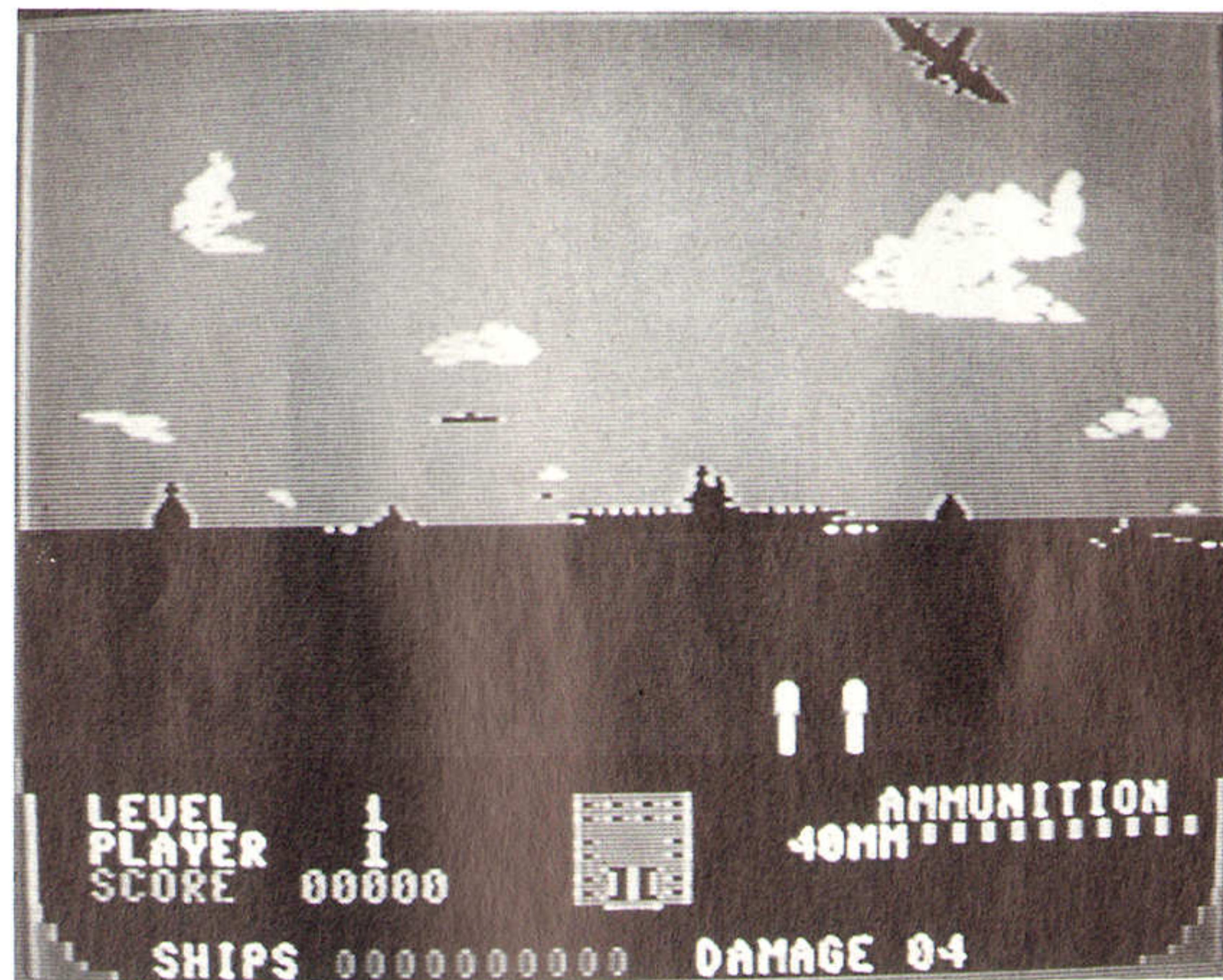
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Circle Reader Service Number 57.

Three for the Price of One



By D. Nathan Richardson

Three games on one floppy disc is a good deal, but three really good games in one is a rare bird indeed. Access Software has put three of its titles in such a package. **Beach-Head** and **Beach-Head II** are both based on the premise of fighting an evil dictator, but the latter can be played head to head. In **Raid Over Moscow** which is the third game, you must make surgical strikes deep into Russia to avoid World War Three.

Beach-Head can be played with one or two players, but the computer always plays the dictator. There are different phases of the game and each requires different skills. A good way to practice is to leave the program alone a minute so it starts displaying each of the phases the game goes through. You can start the game

in any of these phases and skip to the part you want to play without having to go through the beginning over and over again. It has four different skill levels for both one and two players.

If you start the game at the beginning, you have the choice to either run a gauntlet of torpedoes and mines through a narrow passageway, or go straight to the enemy task force and mix it up. You start with ten ships, but you only need half of them to make a full assault on the dictator's fortress. If you go through the mines, you can sneak up on the enemy task force and surprise him. Otherwise he'll hit you with three times as many planes and his gunnery will be three times more accurate. After facing down the task force, it's time to hit the beach and take on the land forces and the fort.

obstacles to reach the fortress, Kuhn-lin. It takes ten shots to knock out the fort, so every tank counts.

Beach-Head II takes up where the other left off, but now you can play either side or against another player. It allows you to practice on different parts of it, like **Beach-Head**, and has three difficulty levels for one or two players.

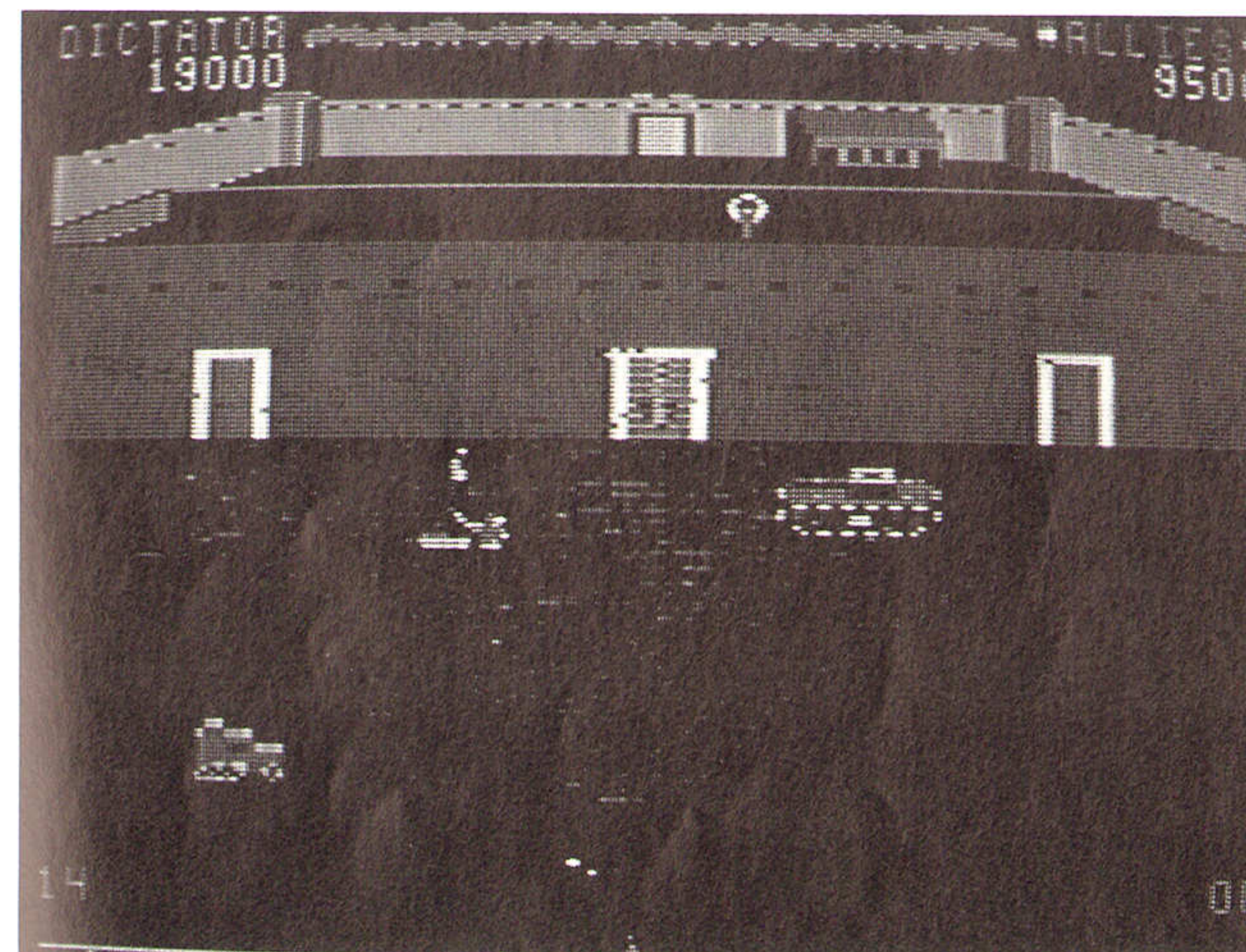
The game begins with the allies dropping paratroops to assault the dictator's fortifications and free the prisoners he's holding. If you play the allies, you must get your infantry past two walls and a machine gun turret. Your only weapons are hand grenades with limited range, and if you're hit, you'll make funny noises like, "medic, I've been hit" or "uhhh". If you play the dictator, you get to operate the machine gun turret and wipe out little infantrymen who, for the most part, can't fight back.

The next screen is the prison yard, where the allies have to protect the prisoners who hobble their way across the screen to freedom. Now, the allied player gets the machine gun turret at the bottom of the screen and the dictator must try to kill the prisoners with mines, armored cars, tanks and stone dropping snipers.

After all the prisoners have made a run for it, the allies must try to fly them out with three helicopters while the dictator uses the terrain to shoot them down.

Finally comes the showdown between the commander of the allies and the dictator in a nine-round knife fight to the death. Each player throws knives across a water filled chasm at the other and uses the joystick to put spin on the knives. Each part of the game is totaled separately, then added up at the end to decide the winner.

The last game in the Triple Pack is **Raid Over**



Moscow, a single player game with three skill levels. This is the only game that doesn't let you practice the different games within it. The first screen shows you an overview of the United States and Russia. It also shows the Russian missiles coming at you and where they were launched from, that site being the target for your space fighter planes.

The first challenge is to simply get these planes out of the hanger. You must then take your jets on ground hugging attacks of the four main missile sites and Moscow, itself. For each successful strike, your planes start back at the

hanger, but you do stop the missiles that were launched from that site towards the U.S.

At the missile silos, you have to line up your jet exactly with the gun turret hole to knock it out. Your jet will change color when you have it lined up right. You can just concentrate on the silo itself, or take out the four other buildings for extra points.

Once the four sites are gone, you get the men you have left to assault the Kremlin, itself. Armed with a bazooka, you must destroy the tank and eight men at the end of the walls, plus shoot the right door of the Kremlin out.

Inside the reactor you must kill the maintenance robots with four shots bounced off the wall to hit them in the back. You must be quick to get the last robot because he'll be more worried about you than keeping the reactor from reaching critical mass. If you reach the last screen, it lets you know how well you did overall.

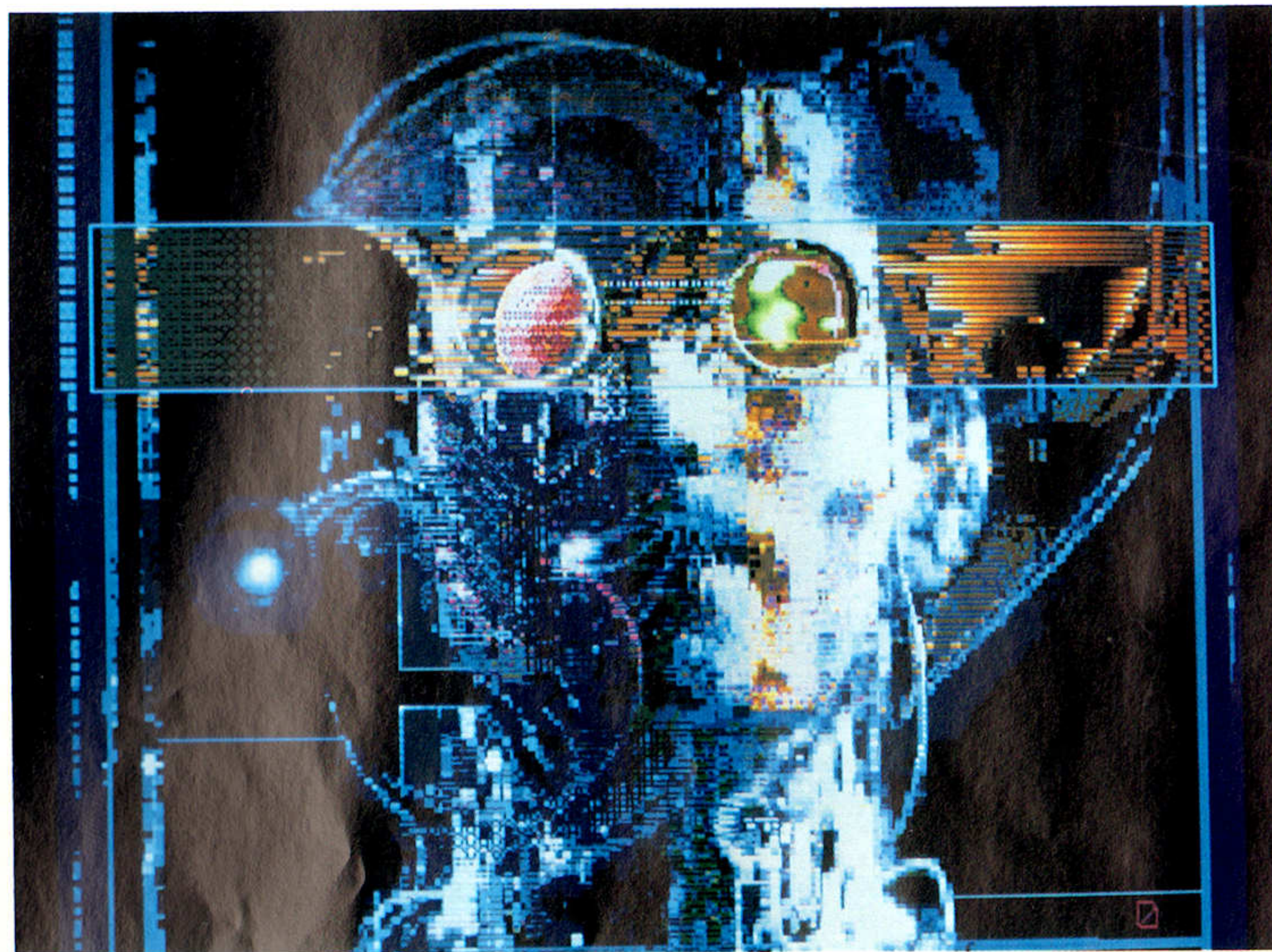
All in all, this Triple Pack is 'such a deal'.

Name: TRIPLE PACK
Type: Arcade
Formats: C64/128, Atari St, Apple II
Publisher: Access Software
Ages: 8 and above
Requirements: Joystick, Disk drive
Players: One or Two
Price: \$19.95

Difficulty: Beginner
Packaging: Fair (6)
Documentation: Fair (6)
Graphics/Text: Fair (6)
Playability: Good (7)

CP RATING: 6.50
Circle Reader Service Number 20.

"2085" New Age Cowboy



By Rawson L. Stovall

The big bold letters on the back of the box stared at me: "Nowadays, hacking in somewhere you don't belong can get you into trouble - in the year 2058 it will get you killed." Just below that in smaller letters it said, "You got 30 megs online, three viruses, six icebreakers and a smart-mouth ROM construct riding shotgun... It's party time in Cyberspace."

Now this sounds like a great game.

The real world location is Chiba City, Japan, and then there's Cyberspace, an electronic universe. That's the setting for **Neuromancer** by Interplay for the C64, a futuristic, humorous, animated role-playing adventure game based on William Gibson's novel of the same name.

The player assumes the role of a cowboy (a.k.a. hacker) living in the techno-crime world of Ciba City. Several other cowboys have been disappearing from the face of the earth and it's up to you to solve the mystery - before your luck runs out.

Everything in **Neuromancer** revolves around cyberspace. All private, corporate, government, and military computer databases can be reached through it. Cyberspace is really just an incomprehensible sea of information and mathematical data.

However, with a computer deck, cyberspace becomes a three-dimensional environment where these various data bases are represented by geometric shapes on a horizontal grid. It's like driving around a city - the bases are

buildings, the lines of the grid are streets, and your computer deck is a car that takes you wherever you want. There's no television set or video monitor. It's all generated inside your brain.

A friend of mine stopped me one day in Sears and asked me if I had played **Neuromancer**. When I told him that I hadn't he acted like I had committed some great sin. He then proceeded to elaborate on the many details of the game and even attempted to explain cyberspace. I say attempted because cyberspace can't be explained - it must be experienced.

Players can explore over 57 real world locations in Gibson's Chiba City, and virus programs can be used to defeat computer security in over 40 databases. The game can be played by keyboard or joystick.

As an added bonus, **Neuromancer** features an amazing digitized soundtrack (words and all) at the beginning of the game. The original soundtrack, titled "Some Things Never Change" was recorded and produced by the pop group DEVO.

It was developed by Interplay Productions, best known for the popular **Bard's Tale** series of fantasy role-playing games, but it is being sold and distributed by Mediagenic (formerly Activision). It's available now for the Commodore 64/128, and it soon will be available for other computers. Blank disks are needed.

Neuromancer is a joystick-driven adventure

game like Lucasfilm's **Maniac Mansion**. Anyone who enjoys witty humor with hours and hours of adventure playing will most certainly enjoy this game.

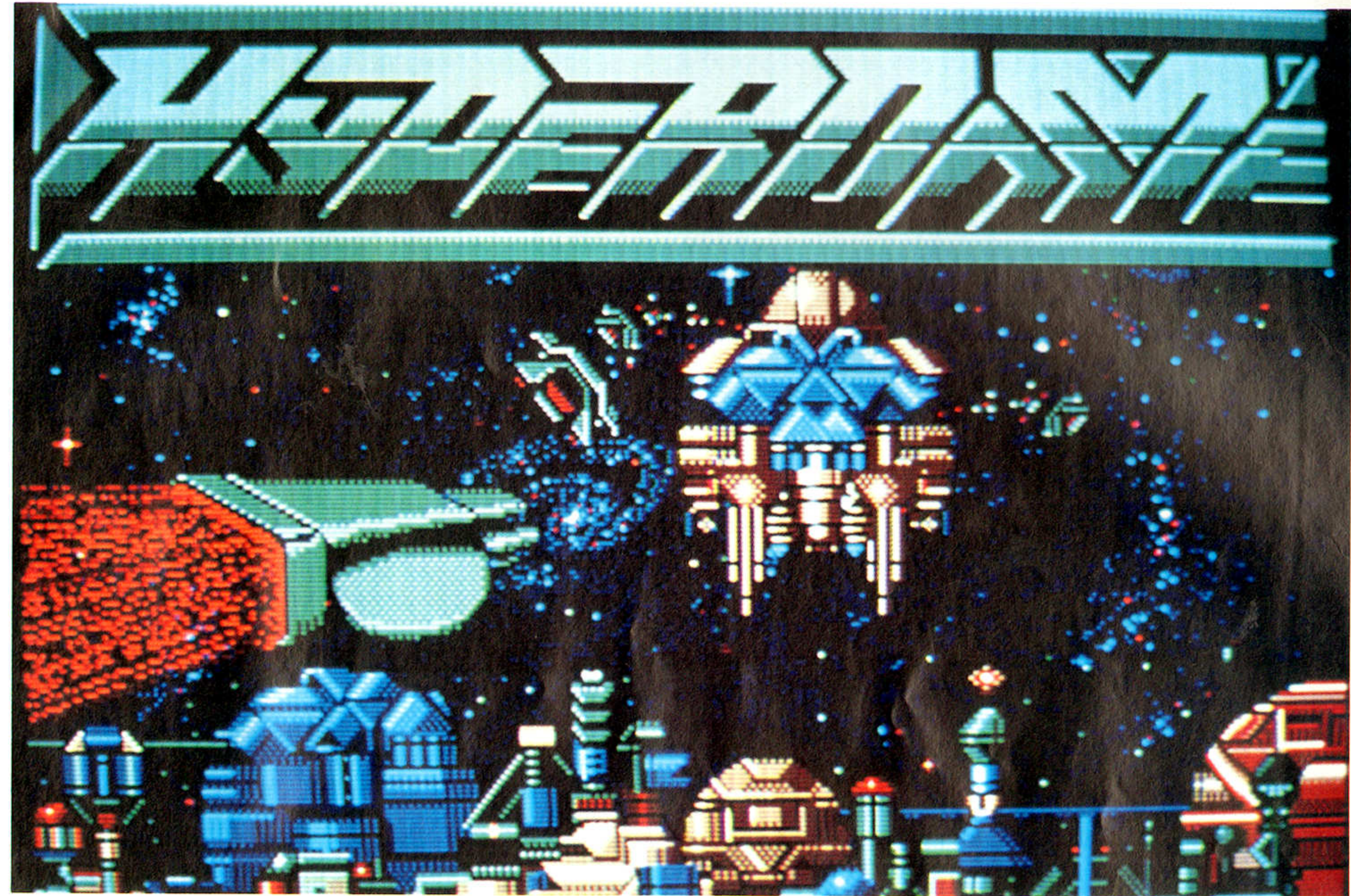
Neuromancer is strange. The storyline is so futuristic, yet so true-to-life. It's like a cross between a Tom Clancy novel and the movies **Robocop** and **Tron**. I really enjoy playing this game, but unfortunately, I don't have time to play it as much as I'd like. Man, what I wouldn't give for another trip into cyberspace.

Name: NEUROMANCER
Type: Adventure
Formats: C64, Apple II, Amiga, MS-DOS
Publisher: Interplay Productions
Designer: Interplay Productions
Requirements: Blank disks; Apple II; 128K
Ages: 12 and up
Players: One
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level: Advanced
Packaging: Very Good (7)
Documentation: Very Good (8)
Graphics: Very Good (8.5)
Playability: Excellent (9)

CP RATING: 8.15
Circle Reader Service Number 40.

Hot Arcade Action from England



By John S. Manor

European owners of Atari ST computers have been enjoying many fine games unavailable in the United States. Until now. A company named Scorpion has imported a few of these games for American ST owners. One such game is **Hyperdome**, from Exocet Software, located in London, England. **Hyperdome** is a fast-action arcade game that pits your space ship against a horde of aliens in tight underground caverns and in deep space.

At the start, your ship is launched from a mother ship with the touch of a joystick button. You have a simple gun that shoots bullets from the nose of your ship. You enter horizontally scrolling caverns and blast away at enemy guns on the wall, aliens that bob and weave at you and anything else that moves. Lifts (elevators, here in the States) form a physical hazard as do rock walls and anything that you bump into. But don't despair, because when you shoot some parts of the walls, they turn into what I call "power pills" (the instruction card doesn't mention them). On the side of the screen you see your score, number of lives left and a list of weapons with a cursor indicating the current weapon available to activate. The power pills

move this cursor down as you run over them. When it's by the weapon you want, you hit the space bar and you get the weapon. You can fire regular missiles, homing missiles or assault shells. You can also speed up your fighter, shoot twice as fast, fire a spread of bullets, get a temporary shield and even select a droid that will help you fight the aliens. When you get zapped by aliens, you lose your hard-won weapons and revert to simple bullets. But there are plenty of power pills so you can get them back quickly.

Hyperdome alternates between caverns and space screens. You clear a cavern and then face the aliens in outer space. After you get by the aliens, a heavily armed asteroid, mother ship or juggernaut will attack you. You will have to destroy it before continuing to the next cavern. My advice is to have the droid along with you when you attack the juggernaut, otherwise you'll have a hard time killing it. When it dies, the juggernaut explodes in a satisfying display of animated graphics. All the graphics in **Hyperdome** make good use of the ST's graphic abilities.

Hyperdome is a tough game to master. It seems to start out on a high difficulty level and keeps on challenging you. This is a game for avid

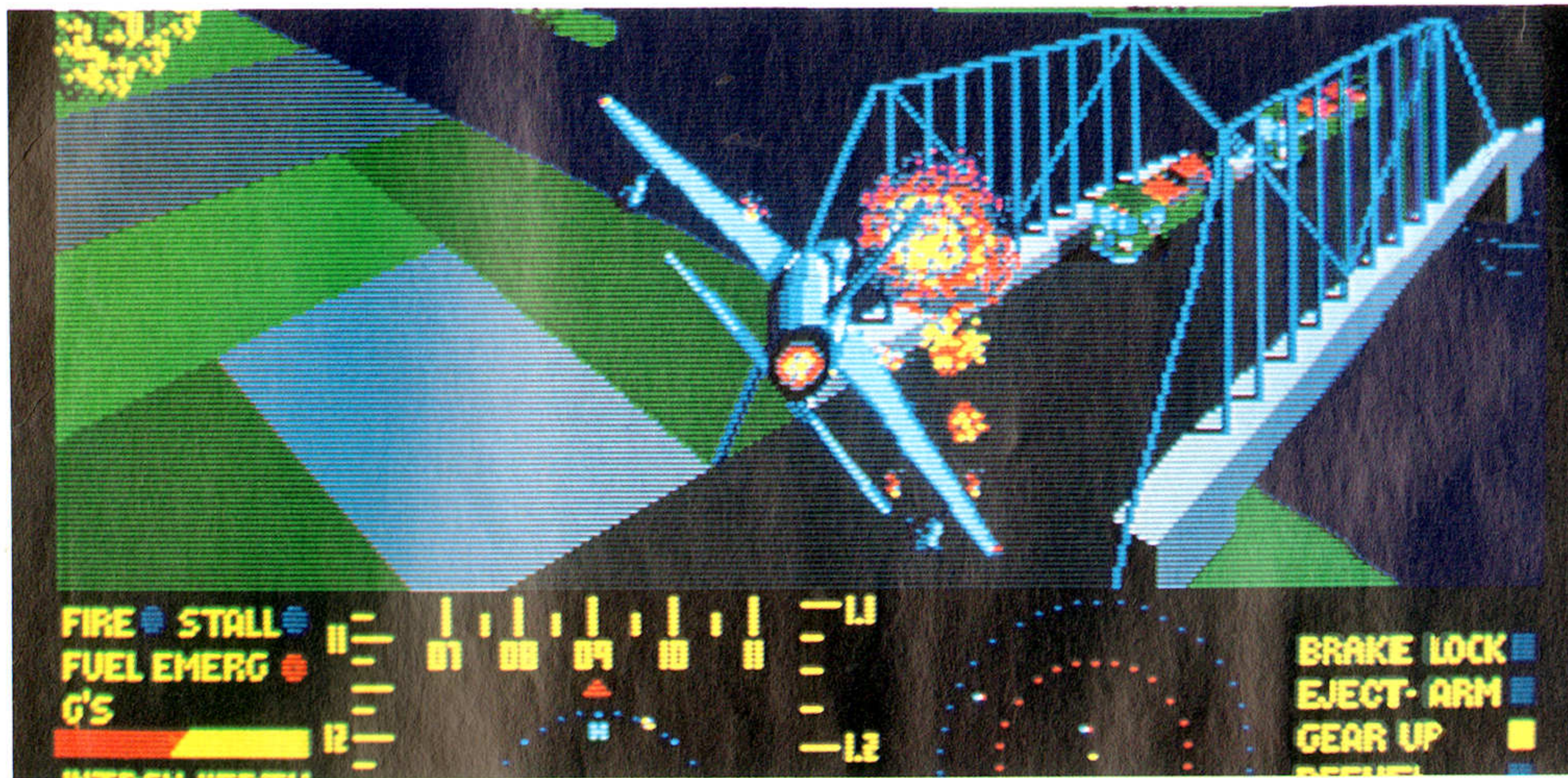
arcade fans who never have enough of plunking down quarters to zap video-aliens. My only criticism is that there should have been a better manual with the game. **Hyperdome** is still a hot little arcade game though, and you won't be disappointed if you are looking for software with the feel of the stand-up games. Besides, maybe it'll save you a few quarters.

Name: HYPERDOME
Type: Arcade
Formats: Atari ST, Amiga
Publisher: Exocet Software
Distributor: Scorpion
Ages: 10 and above
Requirements: Color Monitor
Players: One
Price: \$34.95

Ability Level: Beginner
Packaging: Fair (6.5)
Documentation: Fair (5)
Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.5)
Playability: Very Good (9)

CP RATING: 8.28
Circle Reader Service Number 28.

The Toughest Plane in Vietnam



By John S. Manor

Thud Ridge, from Three-Sixty Pacific, is a simulation of combat missions flown over North Vietnam during the Vietnam War. The F-105 Thunderchief played a major role in Operation "Rolling Thunder", the bombing of targets in North Vietnam. Thud Ridge puts you at the controls of an F-105 (affectionately called a "Thud" by its pilots) and sends you on some of the most dangerous and important missions. I found Thud Ridge to be interesting, playable and even addicting (I kept saying, "Just one more mission" as the early morning hours wore on), though it does have a few flaws. This review is based on the IBM version played on a Tandy 1000.

There are three mission levels in Thud Ridge; Lieutenant, Captain and Colonel. The higher in rank you go, the tougher the mission. Each level has a number of missions actually flown during the war. They range from dropping leaflets and copies of Life magazine over the "Hanoi Hilton", where American POW's were kept, to bombing and strafing bridges, air bases, SAM sites and enemy shipping or even hunting down the notorious communist fighter ace, the "Grey Ghost".

The F-105 got its nickname "Thud" from the fact that it was one of the world's heaviest fighters, weighing in at 50,000 pounds. It was also a tough fighter, again and again surviving damage from anti-aircraft fire that would have destroyed a lesser aircraft. Thud Ridge was a range of mountains northwest of Hanoi, with terrain so rough that the enemy could put few anti-aircraft guns in it. American F-105's and other aircraft would fly through the ridge and

deliver their payloads to their targets.

Before you fly the Ridge in Thud Ridge, you first learn how to arm your fighter and take off. It took me some time to figure out how to get off the ground. The manual is not the best I have ever seen. I finally got into the air in practice mode by hitting Tab, which automatically arms your Thud and puts you up at 10,000 feet. There is also a demo mode that starts automatically after booting if no key is pressed for thirty seconds. It's a good idea to watch the demo, to get an idea of how the game plays.

The top two-thirds of the screen in Thud Ridge shows your Thud from behind and the scenery it flies over. The bottom third changes from control panel views (aircraft function and engine function) to map views. The aircraft function panel has an altimeter, compass, air speed tape, directional compass, a radar screen, a radar lock warning and something called an intrusion vertex. There are also indicators for brake lock, ejection seat armed, landing gear, refuel, flaps down and extinguisher. The engine function panel has dials for engine temperature, nozzle temperature and fuel. There's a picture of your Thud that shows your remaining weapons. Other indicators are elapsed time of mission, afterburner, throttle and radar lock warning.

The maps show you three different views of parts of North Vietnam around Hanoi and Thud Ridge. You leave from an airbase and navigate to one of the map areas by using the directional compass. On a bombing run, a set of dots precede your Thud on the map, when they are over your target, you drop your bombs one at a time in a line. A hit is shown by a green/yellow circle, a miss by a red circle.

Each mission requires different weapons. The "Wild Weasels" were Thud pilots that flew straight into concentrations of SAM (surface-to-air missile) bases to draw fire and then knock them out. One weapon for taking out SAM bases was the Shrike missile. Once fired, it homed in on the SAM installation's own radar. This was so effective that the SAM radar operators began turning their radar on and off intermittently during battle, to confuse the missiles. You can arm your Thud with Shrike missiles for missions that put you up against SAM bases. Your other weapons include Side winder air-to-air missiles, 750 pound bombs (up to 16 per mission), cannon and APC (anti-personnel cartridges). You can also load flares to drop if you're being chased by a heat-seeking missile. Hopefully it will follow the flare and not your exhaust.

One of the first missions I flew was to destroy the Ten Ho MIG base. The prescribed weapons were cannon and APC. I created some havoc with my cannon against Sampans (small boats) that shot at me as I flew over rivers, but I couldn't seem to get the APC's on target at the MIG base. Then I said, "What the Hell, I'll go back and get some bombs". So I restarted the mission and loaded up with cannon and bombs. Well, I pulverized the MIG base in no time and even took out a secondary target, a fuel depot. Each mission has a main target (such as Ten Ho) and two secondary targets (the fuel dump and a SAM site in this case). The heavy bombs are my favorite weapon in this game.

Bombs have little effect on MIG's however (unless they're on the ground). I have found I

18 ►

Track and Report for the ORB

By James V. Trunzo

"The Orb invasion was unexpected, silent and deadly and in the two years that have passed since that time, life as we knew it has changed considerably. Especially for me. You see...I'm a Manhunter!"

Manhunter: New York is a graphic adventure game from Sierra On-Line, Inc. which is guaranteed to captivate anyone who can be seduced into playing it for more than 15 minutes. Not only are the graphics superb, the animation smooth and realistic and the sound effects scintillating, the storyline of the game mixes a heavy dose of Orwell's 1984 with a dash of Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 and a dollop of any number of Hollywood's post-holocaust movies to create an adventure unlike anything else on the market.

A large part of the appeal of Manhunter: New York can be attributed to its unusual theme. Adventure gamers who have tired of skulking about dank dungeons and creepy castles will enjoy "exploring" authentic locations in New York City. Of course, Coney Island and Central Park have undergone some alterations since the coming of the Orbs; but you'll find out for yourself because as a Manhunter, you can expect assignments that will take you from Battery Park to West 82nd Street.

What is a Manhunter? Just what it sounds like. For reasons unknown, the Orbs have selected you to be a Manhunter: to track and report on fellow human beings who have become part of a subversive underground whose goal is to thwart the Orb rule. Aided by a

MAD (Manhunter Assignment Device) pocket sized computer, you will serve the Orbs by following, observing and informing on rebellious, misguided troublemakers. Or will you?

One of the original twists (and they are numerous) in Sierra's Manhunter game allows you to make moral choices as the game progresses. You can literally choose between serving or subverting and the decisions you make will dictate the events that follow each choice and, eventually, determine the outcome of the game itself.

Several other aspects of Manhunter: New York need to be examined. First of all, the graphics and animation parallel the darkness of the game's theme. Grisly scenes and graphic violence permeate much of this game, although a certain humorous overtone serves as a conscious reminder that "it's just a game", even during the deadliest moments. It's hard to imagine that anyone would label the game offensive, but those who are a tad squeamish or strongly anti-violence might want to preview Manhunter before buying it.

Manhunter: New York also contains a number of arcade sequences that range from entertaining to tedious. There's really no way to circumvent the arcade elements in the adventure because they either allow you to move further into the storyline or reveal certain clues that are eventually necessary to the plot. Several of the arcade modules result in a sudden demise for the gamer should he fail to win the little contest. However, Sierra was kind enough to allow the action to be immediately restored at the beginning of the arcade

sequence without the need for a time-consuming Restore. A simple click of the mouse places you back in the middle of the action.

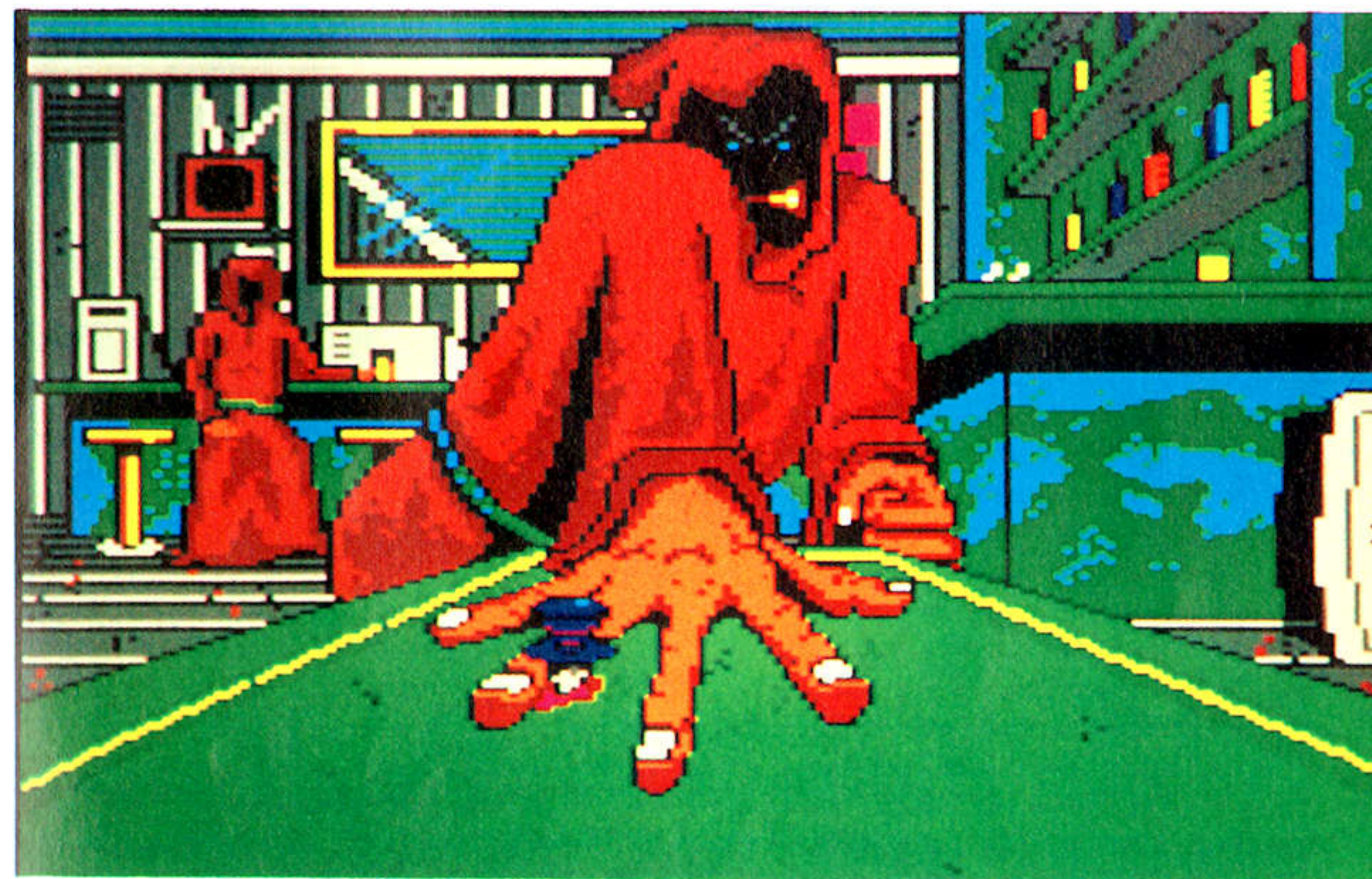
Some purist despise arcade elements in an adventure game while others find them a challenging and refreshing change of pace.

This review was done using the Apple IIGS version of Manhunter: New York and the interface employed a variety of pop-up and pull-down menus that, along with the use of a mouse, made typing in commands unnecessary. As a result, the flow of the game and the speed with which it operated was impressive.

Graphically, the game shifts between a first person and third person perspective, depending upon which viewpoint affords the best overall portrayal of the surroundings. As might be expected, the game is highly visual, employing zoom screens, close-ups and other special effects. It is important to pay close attention to the graphics and animation because gestures, graffiti and the like contain information needed to progress to the end of the game.

Manhunter: New York GS version comes on four unprotected 3.5" diskettes and contains a well-written manual as well as maps of New York's Manhattan area. Part of the reason the manual is essential is that you will be prompted for a word from one of its pages in order to be admitted to the game proper.

Manhunter: New York is a well-conceived adventure that is a departure from the normal themes encountered in games of this genre. It is difficult enough to challenge veteran gamers, yet solvable enough not to frustrate beginners. If you're looking for a change of pace and you aren't frightened by the macabre, Manhunter: New York should provide you with some eerie entertainment.



Name: MANHUNTER: NEW YORK
Type: Graphic Adventure
Formats: Apple IIGS, IBM, Atari ST
Publisher: Sierra On-Line
Designer: Dave, Barry and Dee Dee Murray
Ages: 13 and above
Requirements: Vary by system
Players: One
Price: \$49.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Excellent (9.5)
Documentation: Excellent (9.5)
Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.5)
Playability: Excellent (9.5)

CP RATING: 9.50
 Circle Reader Service Number 36.

can blast any number of MIG's out of the air in no time with my cannon. It's almost too easy. Taking out a MIG with a Sidewinder missile is a lot harder. You see a square cross-hair over the enemy aircraft and launch your missile by hitting a key (F2 on the Tandy). Nine times out of ten my missiles do something other than what I intended, like flying off into the distance. I believe the trick is to keep the cross-hair on the MIG while the missile flies and not to get too close when firing. I've managed two or three hits so I'm getting better at it. The MIG's in the game are mostly fodder for my cannons, even the fearsome "Grey Ghost", who I blasted out of the air on my first attempt. When I do lose a Thud, it's usually either due to pilot error or anti-aircraft fire.

The graphics in Thud Ridge are pretty good for an IBM. They are somewhat better than Flight Simulator II, using both wire frame and filled graphics. When you fly through Thud Ridge at the start of some missions, you see wire-frame mountains and hills. You have to stay below the ridge, otherwise SAM sites fire at you. When they fire, you find you are playing two games at one time. You must fire Sidewinder missiles at the incoming SAMs, guide them with the keyboard, and watch them explode, while trying not to spread your Thud on a mountainside like peanut butter. When you leave the ridge (a real challenge in the Colonel

level) you come out over the countryside (maybe over rice paddies) which looks like a patchwork-quilt landscape you might see from an airliner. I was tempted to see how low I could fly, so I buzzed some SAM bases and actually saw the missiles up close before being blown to bits. I also found out you can fly under bridges and right past enemy sampans which look three-dimensional from just above ground level. Thud Ridge has entertainment possibilities beyond combat missions.

Dogfights with MIGs, while I usually win them, are quite realistic. The MIGs look just like aircraft in movies as I dive down on them or fight to get on their tails. Sometimes they come at you four or five at a time, which keeps things a little interesting.

I found a couple of problems in Thud Ridge. When I attacked the Ten Ho MIG base I got into a dogfight. I climbed up and did a barrel roll. The Thud disappeared into a band of horizontal lines. This is an intermittent problem that only seems to appear when I barrel roll in a dogfight. I also thought some kind of sound could have been added to the take-off controls and other functions, to make it easier to know when you've pressed the right key.

I like Thud Ridge a lot. I played mission after mission and still wanted more. I enjoyed experimenting with the game and trying out different ways of playing with it. I even went back to see what damage I caused after a bombing mission,

something the manual advises against because the enemy will be waiting for just that. (I did get shot down, now that I think about it). Though it has flaws, Thud Ridge gets my recommendation because I just plain loved playing it. It's an entertaining flying game that will have you racing through the skies over Vietnam like an Ace in no time.

Name: THUD RIDGE
Type: Air Combat Simulation
Formats: IBM, Amiga, Atari ST, Apple IIGS, C64
Publisher: Three-Sixty Pacific
Ages: 12 and above
Requirements: 512K IBM, EGA, GCA or Hercules
Comes on a 5 1/4" disk. 3 1/2" up-grade available.
Players: One
Price: \$34.95, \$39.95

Ability Level: Intermediate-Advanced
Packaging: Good (8)
Documentation: Fair (6.5)
Graphics/Text: Good (8)
Realism: Very Good (9)
Playability: Very Good (9)

CP RATING: 8.41
Circle Reader Service Number 27.

Let's Go Fishin'

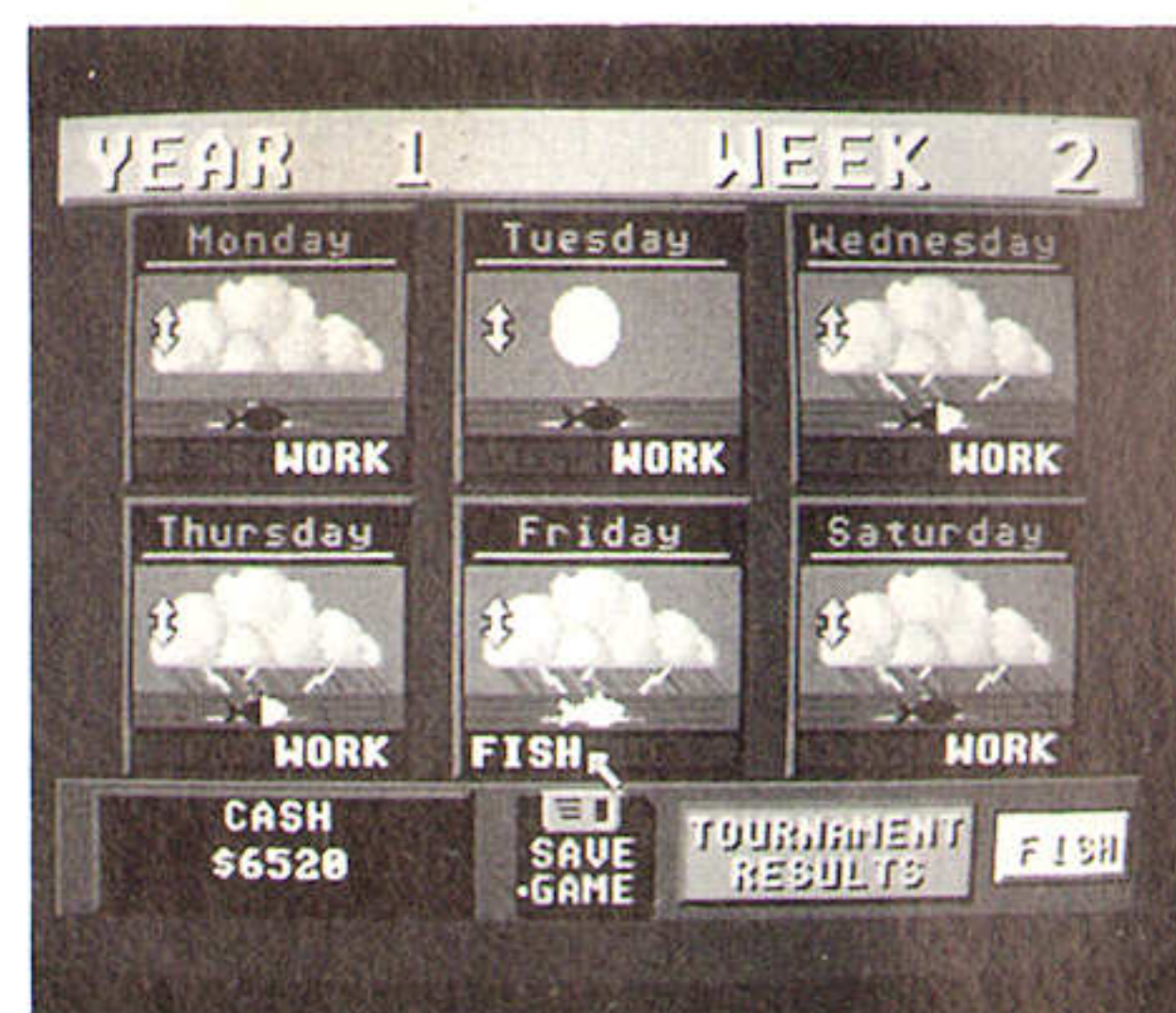
By Daniel Carr

Reel Fish'n is just that, fishing. It is a simulation in which you get your rod, reel, tackle box and boat and go out on one of six lakes and fish your brains out for bass. The object is to enter and win tournaments, collect prize money, buy more equipment and continue fishing.

Upon booting up (the game uses the keyword-from-the manual trick, so it's copyable) the first screen you get is the Weather Forecast. This screen contains, for each day of the week except Sunday, information about temperature, weather (clear, sunny, cloudy etc.) and of course "Uncle Jake's Fishing Forecast". (Good 'ole Jake will tell you if they're biting or not). The screen also contains information on the amount of money you have, tournament results, and the year and week you're in (a season is twenty weeks long). There is also a save game feature.

The Kitchen screen has four items to look at. The radio gives a weather report for the day (the Forecast screen might be wrong). Your log tallies the fish caught. A tip book gives hints. Lastly, the map lists each of the six lakes, cost to go to each, along with the average and biggest fish caught there and current fishing conditions for the lake.

Once a lake is chosen, it's time to go the the Tackle Shop. Sixteen types of lures are



available from surface plugs to crank baits and bottom bouncers. There are also two types of boats, repair tools and a depthfinder to buy.

When you are out on the lake, you can use your gas or electric motor to maneuver around the lake and find the best spot, drop anchor, pick a lure and cast away.

This is the meat of the game. The screen changes to show your rod along with a cut-away view of the lake so you can see where your lure is and when a fish makes a "strike". When he does bite, moving the mouse and hitting the buttons will allow you to "pump" the rod and reel him in.

Now that I've described the program, I can sum it all up in one word: BORING! The act of

fishing is just plain dull with very little to do. Sitting there and waiting for a bite while reeling in my line offered no excitement at all. The cut-away view will show a fish run across the screen, grab the lure and run while I'm pushing the mouse (pumping the rod) and hoping he doesn't get away. This was fun for about two minutes before I decided to put the program on my shelf to become stare-ware. I can't recommend this game, it doesn't work very well as a fishing simulation and falls flat as an arcade-style game.

Name: REEL FISH'N
Type: Simulation
Format: Amiga
Publisher: Interstel
Designer: Roger Damon
Ages: 10 and above
Requirements: 512K
Players: One **Price:** \$44.95

Difficulty: Beginner
Packaging: Good (7)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics/Text: Good (8)
Playability: Poor (2)

CP RATING: 4.90
Circle Reader Service Number 17.

Less Bang for the Buck



By Peter M. Sheppard

At first glance I thought this would be a good game for the price. So much for judging a book by its cover! Alien Destruction Set by CRL Group Software has produced a garden variety arcade game reminiscent of coin-op videos of the past. Unfortunately, very little imagination went into this product depicting a futuristic catastrophe. In the 27th century a craft of monolithic proportions is launched into deep space, but something went wrong and it is attacked by an unknown enemy. All that is left are fragments of the original ship and a mystery as to what exactly happened. The four ships remaining from the original convoy are used to

retrieve the missing parts. Each ship represents a different game and has its own codename: Vengeance, Discovery, Thundercross and Death Or Glory. There are four different challenges involving each of these games.

Vengeance is designed along the same lines as older coin-op games such as Galaga or Galaxian. You must shoot your way through onslaughts of alien ships on your way to the boarding platform. Once inside, you must find all eight of the hidden engine components and make it back out without getting killed. Discovery is quite similar to Vengeance. There are twelve docking areas which you must fight your way to and solve each of the puzzles contained within. Though you may enter the

subgames in any order, I suggest you start with number one and work your way up. This is because, after exiting the higher docking area, the aliens attacking you become more fearless. Each time you complete a puzzle a different section of the control unit is constructed, thus solving another part of the mystery. Thundercross contains eight gun ports and can shoot in any direction. The one drawback is you can't move and shoot at the same time. This can get pretty hairy, trying to kill the aliens as they're smashing into you, destroying your shields. You must kill enough of the aliens in order to escape the motherships' tractor beam. Death Or Glory is by far the least challenging of the four games. Instead of shooting the aliens, you must ram them, while blowing up parts of the floating space station fragments below. There is no explanation as to why you must blow up these fragments. The cassette tape provided for instructions makes no mention of any goal at all in this part of the game, which is rather unfortunate.

Alien Destruction Set is a prime example of how a good idea can go very bad. Though it sounds tempting, having four games in one package, the end result is disappointing. However, the documentation is quite unique. Every description and instruction is pre-recorded onto a cassette tape, but even this can get a little campy as times, as you are inundated with needless propaganda about the game. The only redeeming quality to the game is that the high scores from previous games are saved and updated; a feature seldom practiced by other game designers.

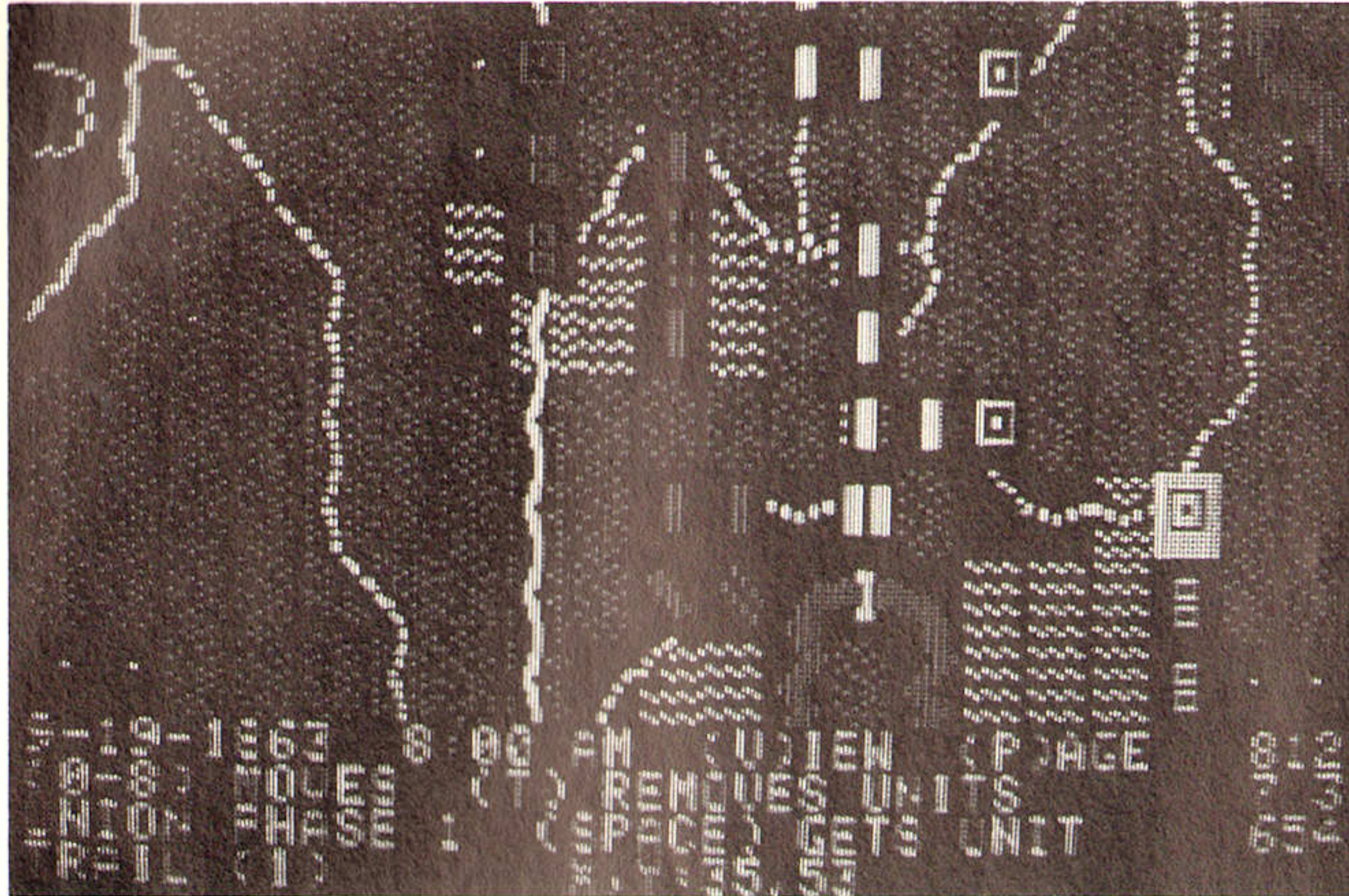
This game is typical of the kind of product that comes from a country where software is considered public domain. There is little incentive to spend time making really good, and imaginative, video games. But if you like a small step up from mindless "shoot'em up" games of the past, this one might interest you.

Name: Alien Destruction Set
Type: Arcade
Formats: C64/128
Publisher: CLR Group PLC
Designer: Clement Chambers, Jeff Lee & John Law
Distributor: Scorpion
Ages: 8 and above
Requirements: Joystick or Keyboard
Players: One
Price: \$29.95

Difficulty: Beginner
Packaging: Average (5)
Documentation: Poor (2)
Graphics/Text: Average (5)
Playability: Average (5)

CP RATING: 4.55
Circle Reader Service Number 19.

Get a Charge from Chickamauga



By Daniel Carr

On September 19, 1863, the Confederate army launched a large attack aimed at hitting the Union's Army of the Cumberland and striking such a blow that the army would be crushed and scattered throughout the countryside. Luck for the Confederates came in the form of a poorly written order which opened a hole in the Union's lines and allowed the Army of Tennessee to slam the gap and rout most of the Union's army.

Rebel Charge at Chickamauga simulates the combat that took place near the Chickamauga Creek on September 19-20. This is a very elaborate and complicated wargame which you won't be able to finish in a few hours.

Upon booting up (the program uses the word-from-the-manual security format, so it's copyable), you have a menu to set game defaults. You can play against the computer or another human or have the computer play itself. Other defaults include: basic, intermediate and advanced game, hidden or non-hidden units for a "fog of war" effect, a time limit to complete a turn and various options to adjust reinforcement arrivals, amount of ammunition available to a unit and command control.

The map is a huge grid, 63 rows by 53 columns, with hills, forests, fields, the Chickamauga Creek, bridges, roads and trails. On the Amiga version, the terrain is colorfully done and easy to distinguish. Two screens, a tactical (20 by 10) and strategic (40 by 20) are used to facilitate play. A cursor the size of a square is used to scroll the map and activate units to receive orders which can be done with mouse or keyboard.

Just below the map are the status display and two menus. The status display gives all the

pertinent information about the unit, such as, its identification, strength, ammunition supply, morale, location and several other items. Of the menus, the first is for the cursor which allows you to access a unit, perform recons (move the cursor over an enemy unit to determine its strength), conduct combat and give you a view of all the squares which can be seen from the square the cursor is on. The second menu, the command menu, allows you to manipulate the unit in many ways, including movement, facing, plot fire and melee, divide a unit in two and many other "housekeeping" (exit menu, abort move, etc.) routines.

The basic game is a highly playable simulation of the battle, with most of the options eliminated for ease of play. At this level all one needs to do is concentrate on movement, combat and fatigue. Movement and losses increase fatigue and thus reduce combat effectiveness. Resting reduces fatigue and rallies a broken unit.

The intermediate and advanced games add a lot more to worry about. A unit can face in one of eight directions. Infantry can be in normal or column mode, cavalry can be mounted or unmounted and artillery is limbered or unlimbered. Other constraints include ammunition supply and morale. With the advanced game, command control and fortifications are introduced. Command control involves a set of formulas to produce the "operation points" which allows a unit to perform actions. Essentially, the closer a unit is to its brigade and corps commander, the higher the amount of operation points it will receive. Fortifications reduce the combat effectiveness of the attacking unit. Also with the advanced game, are individual leaders which can be killed and moved around to other units.

Victory is based on a running point system.

After each turn, points are tallied and displayed along with a chart so each player can see how they're doing. For example, one point is awarded for every enemy infantryman/artilleryman killed, 100 points per brigade leader lost, and 1000 to 5000 points for holding certain "objective" squares. The total Confederate points are subtracted from the Union's, with for example, 10,001 points equaling a major victory for the Union.

There are only a few gripes to address. One is that in the intermediate and advanced modes, units can be represented by symbols instead of icons. The symbol for infantry is the same as cavalry (a small rectangle) so you have to access a unit if you forgot what it is. Also, when changing facing, there is no way to tell (on the map) if a unit is facing forward or backward, so you must again access the unit to find out. All of this gets tedious after a while and reduces playability. Plus, I would like to see the "objective" squares placed on the map as an aid instead of having to look them up on the map card. Lastly, be prepared for a lot of clicking and mouse dragging. With so many units to handle, it's tiring getting everything situated just right for that big attack and even though there are a few utilities to help (one will cycle you through your army automatically, brigade by brigade, greatly speeding up play) it still takes a while to do a turn.

Rebel Charge at Chickamauga is, however, an excellent wargame. It captures a lot of the flavor of a Civil War battle with the way the infantry, cavalry and artillery are used and shows how bloody combat can be. The two sides are evenly matched with the random element reduced, given the way command control, morale, fatigue and leadership are handled, so that victory is pretty much up to the strategy and tactics of the player(s). There's not much sound, except for gunfire and a funny "run away" yell when a unit routs.

Name: REBEL CHARGE AT CHICKAMAUGA

Type: Historical Wargame

Format: Amiga, IBM, Apple II,

C64/128, Atari ST

Publisher: SSI

Designers: Chuck Kroegel

& David Landrey

Ages: 10 and above

Requirements: 512K (Amiga)

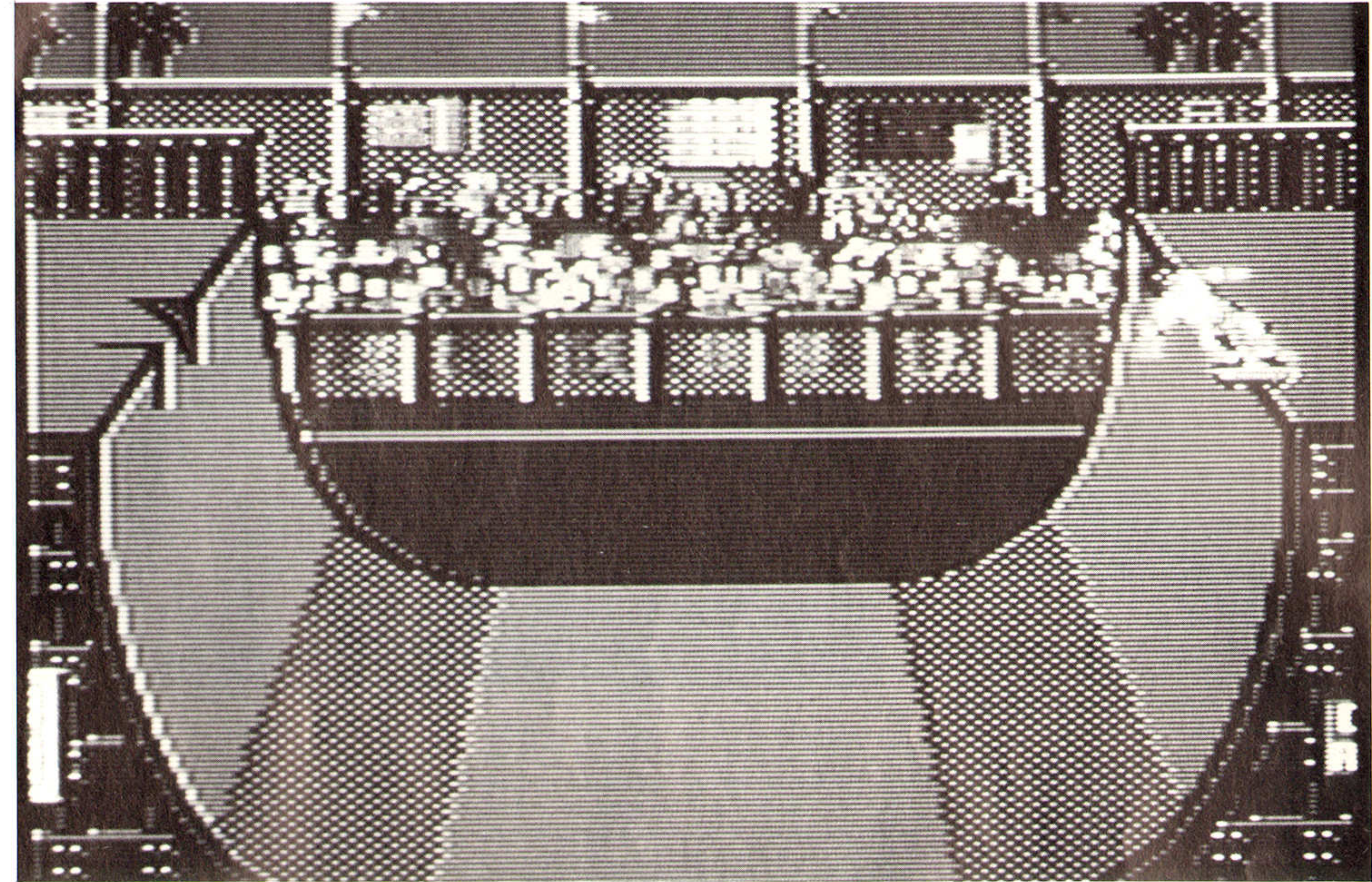
*** Players: One or Two**

Price: \$49.95

Difficulty: Beginner to Advanced
Packaging: Very Good (9)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics/Text: Good (7)
Playability: Good (7)

CP RATING: 7.35
Circle Reader Service Number 16

Downhill Jamm'n with Rad Dudes!



By James V. Trunzo

You are about to take a little test and if you pass, you will definitely want to read the rest of this review. If you fail...well, then it will depend upon your curiosity. Okay, here goes - Identify any of the following terms: boffing stick, tweaks, ollies, front ariels, channel drop. Got 'em? That's Rad, Dude! Grab your board and do grind time into the next paragraph.

Skate or Die, from Electronic Arts, puts you on a skateboard and into competition against some of the punkiest skaters around. Whether you're smokin' the half pipe doing freestyles, racing downhill in to park or jousting in the empty swimming pool, Skate or Die challenges your skill and wits.

The program offers five different events in which you can practice or participate. In addition to the aforementioned, Skate or Die dares you to enter the Downhill Jam, a back alley, no-holds-bared race against time and the flying fists of your opponent; or join in the High Jump, a gut-check event that dares you to hit max speed in the half ramp and shoot for the top or the height marker.

Regardless of the event you choose, you'll be delighted with the graphics and animation in Skate or Die. Previously released for several

other machines, the program has made a successful transition to the IBM...although successful doesn't mean perfect.

While the graphics are excellent in EGA mode, the price you pay is speed in execution. As a matter of fact, if you're running at 4.77 mghz, you'll have no choice but to give up the superior graphics and run Skate or Die in CGA mode. Otherwise, the slowness of the action defeats not only the simulation of skateboarding but also the challenge. At a higher mghz, the lack of speed won't be noticeable in most events.

The game can be played using either a joystick or the keyboard; however, a joystick is highly recommended. Its use enhances game play in all events and is almost a must in the High Jump. Because various tricks and maneuvers demand a combination of key strokes, a certain awkwardness occurs which is alleviated by the use of a joystick.

In spite of the caveats, Skate or Die offers the same type of enjoyment and challenge as do products like Summer Games and its ilk. Great attention has been paid to small details that heighten both the realism of the simulation and pleasure of the game. The antics of the skateboarder after he has successfully completed a "mondo move" or knocked his

opponent off a board in the joust are both appropriate and fun to watch.

If you like arcade-style action, skate into Rad Rod's shop, compliment him on his blue 'doo, and grab a board. See you on the ramp!

Name: SKATE OR DIE

Type: Arcade

Formats: Apple IIGS, IBM, C64

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Designers: David Bunch, Michael

Kosaka and Stephen Landrum

Ages: 10 and above

Requirements: Color monitor,

color/graphics adapter

*** Players: One or Two**

Price: \$39.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Good (8)
Documentation: Average (7)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (8.5)
Realism: Very Good (8.5)
Playability: Very Good (9)

CP RATING: 8.48
Circle Reader Service Number 37.

For The True Tennis Fan

By Rusel DeMaria

Tennis is a game of reflexes, endurance, and strategy. Shot placement and control of the ball are essential, and the mental game is often the deciding factor in the outcome of a match.

Therefore, **Serve & Volley** from Accolade is not (I repeat, not) a simple repeat of Pong with fancy graphics. This game attempts to be a tennis simulation. It probably won't appeal to all players, but it will certainly catch the attention of many.

Serve & Volley comes with a roster of players ready to play. Two of them are computer controlled only. However, most people will prefer to create their own player, setting his or her traits on a graphic display. You must sacrifice some of one trait to gain more of another; for instance, to have more speed, you lose some endurance. The other pairs of traits are forehand vs. backhand and power vs. accuracy. While this prevents you from creating a super character - a McEnroe or a Becker - with exceptional speed and endurance, for instance, it keeps a certain parity in the game.

You can play in easy, medium, and hard modes (which range from slower to faster play), in one, three, or five game sets, on a hard court, grass, or clay (with associated changes in ball and player responses), and finally, choose from among three scenes for the match - Centre Court, Seaside, or the Country Club practice court.

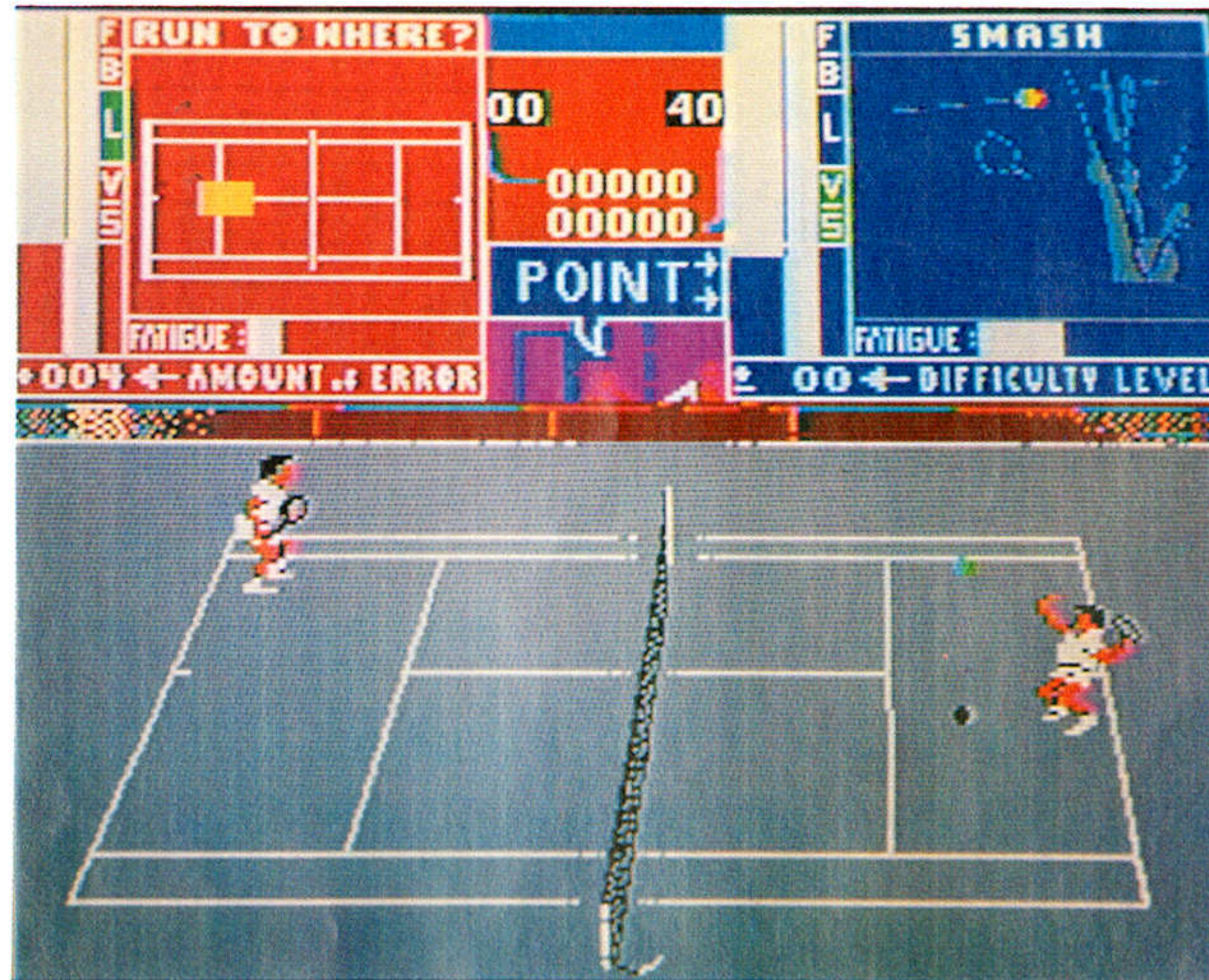
Serve & Volley keeps player statistics, so each time you play a match, your stats are updated. If you win, you may climb up the ranking ladder, eventually becoming the number one seed.

You can set up single elimination tournaments, playing in each match, or letting the computer play both sides of some matches. Also, for computer controlled matches, you can view the match or simply let the computer determine the result.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Serve & Volley is its playing interface. This is where the game may lose some players. At first, the interface is difficult to grasp, though it soon becomes second nature. It requires quick thinking and decision making, but is really very simple.

The game is played from the keyboard. As you view the two players on the court a special window opens on the screen. First you select the kind of shot to make by pressing the special "select" key as a meter bar rises past the three shot types (Volley/Smash, Lob, or Forehand-Backhand). At the same time you must decide where your shot should go (pressing certain keys on the keyboard to move a rectangle on the court map in the window). Then, as your opponent takes his best shot back, you have a chance to guess where he will place the ball and head in that direction (it helps that you can see his shot placement window).

All this decision making takes place very



quickly, and after you have made shot decisions, you must press the select key again at just the right time as the meter bar quickly falls through the "hot" zone (marked in green on the bar). Fans of Mean 18 will recognize this basic technique. For the rest of you, it may sound confusing, but it does get easier once you have done it a few times, though there is a learning curve. By the way, the green zone shrinks as the difficulty of the shot increases. For instance, a medium lob is very easy and has a very wide green zone, but a cross-court smash to the corner may have a very narrow green zone, and pressing the key at the wrong time on a difficult shot will usually result in a shot out of bounds or into the net.

Serving is a special case of the ordinary shot, and the basic moves are the same, though the three shot choices are Flat, Slice, and Topspin (Flat is the default choice).

Once you perform the steps necessary to make your shot, you can watch the result on the screen as the two players perform the necessary actions. All this takes place in real time, so if you fail to make the decisions quickly enough, you lose your chance.

This is a game of strategy. Therefore, you want to place shots all over the court. You can easily beat the computer players by wearing them out, since endurance is an important factor in the game. Using easy lobs from side to side, you can force the opponent to tire and make a bad shot. In fact, the computer players are not so hard to beat. The best fun of this game is playing against another human player. Then the tension and competition build and the challenge is consistent.

Although I liked Serve & Volley, I'm not sure it will appeal to everyone. Even as you go back for just one more match, slightly obsessed with winning tournaments and being the best, you can't help feeling slightly removed from the action. You spend most of each game watching the meter bar and trying to get the best shot off, and you really feel somewhat disconnected from the character on the screen. And, though I found the challenge of the game enjoyable, I wouldn't be surprised if many game players found this control method awkward or at least too removed for them. It's really a matter of choice, but if you are a tennis fan, you owe it to yourself to give Serve & Volley a chance.

Name: SERVE & VOLLEY

Type: Sports Simulation

Formats: IBM, Apple IIGS, C64

Publisher: Accolade

Designers: Artech Digital

Ages: 7 and up

Requirements: Graphics card (CGA, EGA, Hercules MGA, or Tandy 16 Color) 256K RAM

Players: One

Price: \$29.95, \$39.95

Ability Level: Beginner to Advanced

Packaging: Good (8)

Documentation: Good (8)

Graphics/Text: Very Good (8.5)

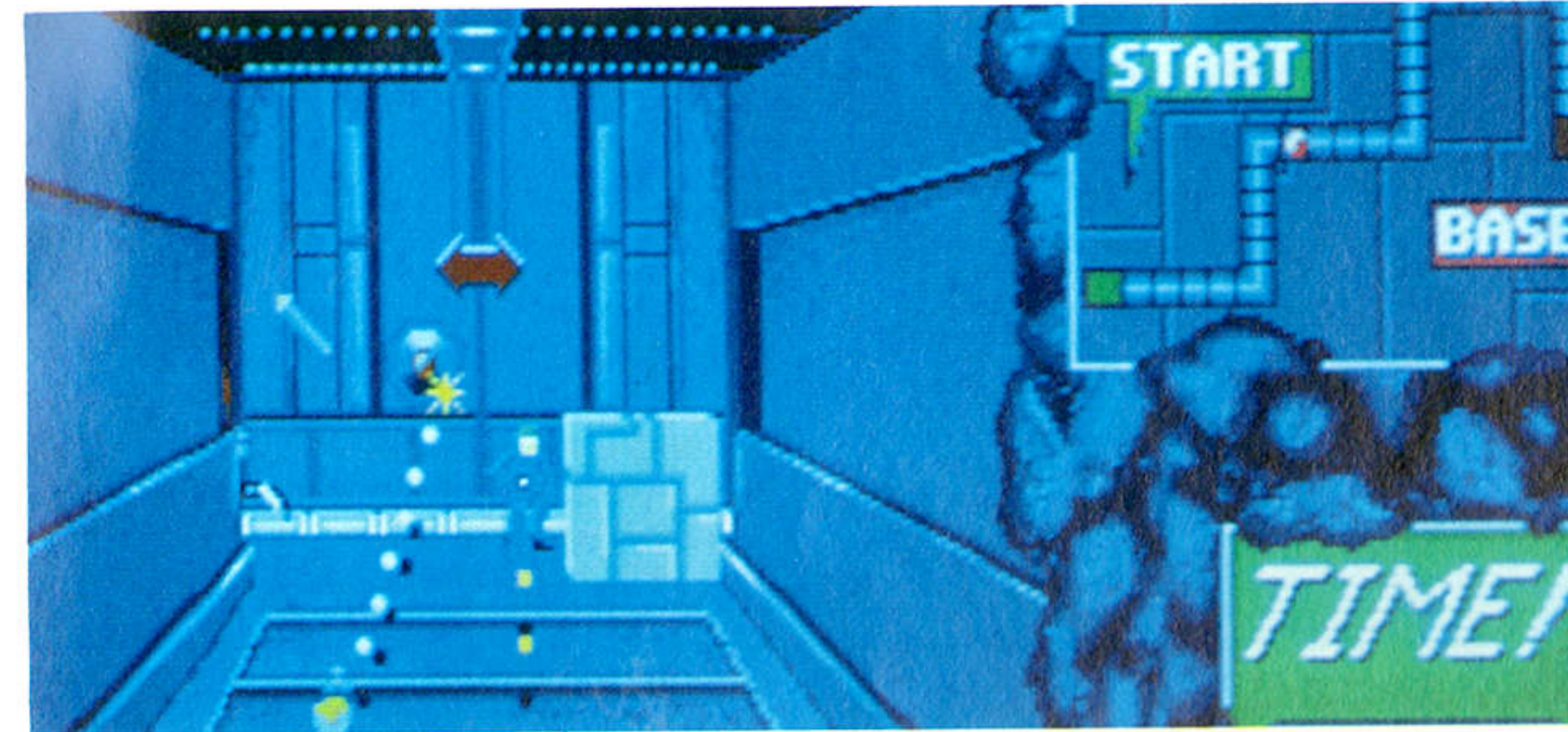
Realism: Good (8)

Playability: Very Good (8.5)

CP RATING: 8.31

Circle Reader Service Number 13.

Three Arcade Winners from Konami



By R. Bradley Andrews

Arcade games are one of the most popular forms of entertainment software around. While the IBM PC was not designed as a game machine, it does have its share of action titles and this article plans to look at three of them. All three games covered are produced by Konami and are conversions of their popular Nintendo cartridges, which were based off of successful coin-op games. While many factors are similar, each game features different playing style and tactics.

The basic theme of each game and any special characteristics it has will be discussed first, then the article will close with a discussion of the common features of these releases and a comparative rating of the three programs.

The first game on the list is **Contra**. Contrary to the title, it does not concern a war against Nicaragua. It is about a conflict in the jungles of South America, though. It seems that the alien Red Falcon took up residence deep in the Amazon, 30 years ago, and is now ready to spread terror over the face of the earth. This vile creature plans to use Earth's subjugation as

a stepping stone to complete rule of the galaxy. Ruling out a large scale assault for political reasons, the Pentagon has decided to send two of its best special operations fighters in to find and then destroy the Red Falcon, himself.

You, and a friend if available, begin by being air dropped in at the edge of the Red Falcon's stronghold. Armed only with a special assault rifle, you must fight through wave after wave of alien minions. Your route will take you through several areas of the forest, as well as a couple of highly guarded bases. Most feature a scrolling play field, while the bases are actually three dimensional tunnels you must maneuver through. The final stage will find you face-to-face with the Red Falcon. Here you will have to kill all of the growing larvae and then enter the Red Falcon's own body to destroy his evil heart. Only then can the Earth, and Universe, be safe.

Several "super-weapons" can be obtained along the way by shooting specially marked holders. These can provide rapid fire, spread guns, lasers and many other highly effective weapons to aid you in your task. Getting these weapons is not easy though. Not only will many soldiers actively rush at you. Many ground emplacements exist with the sole function of destroying you.

43 ►

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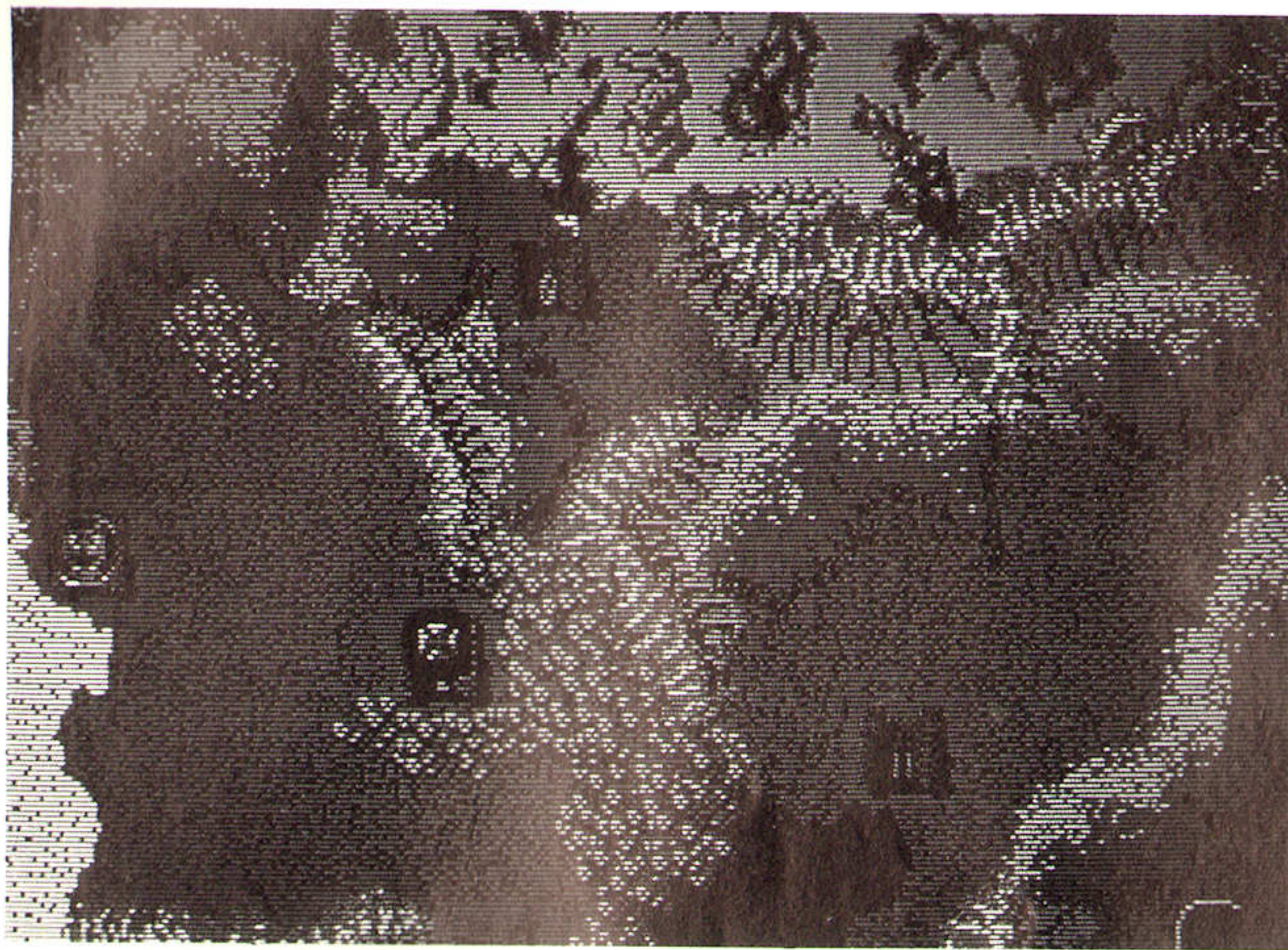
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Mobilize Quickly for Survival



By Daniel Carr

The new Shadowlord wants it all. While not content with his measly holdings, he's decided to rebuild the empire of his ancient forefathers and kick as much butt as possible (don't they all). Opposing him however are the peace loving peoples of Galanor. So by gathering up his power, he puts together legions of wolf riders and warriors and heads out.

Galanor, however, is made up of three kingdoms. Morgalion is composed of hardy mountain men, while the men of Herdach live in the north. The largest kingdom, Rovanium, is composed of very manly warriors armed with much better armor and weapons than Herdach and Morgalion.

Scattered around Galanor are also elves and barbarians. The Elves of Imryth occupy forest areas to the west and are remotely related to the Shadowlord, but in no way allied to him. The Barbarians of Savantor live in the central desert and plains.

Sorcerer Lord is a fantasy wargame in which the player controls the forces of Galanor with the computer controlling (surprise!) the Shadowlord. The game is played in a series of turns with the Shadowlord moving and conducting combat and then the Galanor player mobilizing his troops, moving and having combat as well. Note that the computer randomly mobilizes the player's troops. To win you must either capture the Shadowlord's citadel or crush all of his legions.

The map (terrain) and units are graphically stunning and very well done. The map size equals (in screens) two columns by three rows for a total of six screens. All the castles, mountains, forests, hills and lakes are colorful

and easy to distinguish from each other. Units on the map are represented by picturesque shields. Superimposed over the map, although not seen, is a hex grid to regulate movement. Terrain (hills, mountains, forests, etc.) costs different movement points to cross and the Shadowlord's legions can cross water whereas the player's units cannot.

To activate a unit the arrow keys are used to move a hex shaped cursor over the unit and the rest of the keyboard is used to conduct actions. The stats for the unit appear in a window that opens up and shows the unit leader's name, combat rating (the higher the better in battle), sorcery rating (used when near one of the eight "Rune Rings"), number of warriors and riders, fatigue and movement points. A unit can move normally or be force marched to get extra movement points. This accumulates fatigue and reduces combat effectiveness.

Also during the mobilization phase, castles that haven't been taken will raise garrisons which can be recruited into a unit if it starts its turn in a castle. Only units can move and there is unlimited stacking. Plus a unit can detach troops to form a garrison as well.

Magic is in the form of eight "Rune Rings" scattered around the map. Both sides in combat can summon up demons to aid in battle. The usefulness of this is measured by two things: proximity (in movement points) to a ring and the unit leader's sorcery rating. So a leader with a high sorcery rating sitting on a ring can often summon devastating amounts of magic which can be key to winning a battle when the odds aren't so good.

Valuable to combat are the racial types of the units. The elves fight and move faster in the

forests while the barbarians excel, likewise, in the deserts. The Men of Morgalion fight and move well in the mountains and use siege engines, making them excellent at taking castles. Their cousins to the north, Men of Herdach, fight well in the colder areas. The Men of Rovanium are heavily armed and are good all-purpose troops.

Combat is conducted when a unit moves into an enemy's hex. Leader quality, fatigue, terrain, magic, racial types and of course troop strength, are all factored in the combat result. Once all of a unit's troops are killed, the unit itself with its leader is eliminated. This can make it hard to get fresh troops into battle when you can't spare a unit to go around to the various castles and pick up the garrisons as reinforcements.

The game plays well as a whole, but there are a few problems. I would like to see more information on the map. Having to look at each castle separately to find out what the garrison size is or to sort through a large stack of units by hand to get the total troop size of the stack became tedious after a while. Plus, I wish there was a utility to move large stacks all at once since it takes a long time to move ten or twelve units in a stack, one at a time.

All in all, however, **Sorcerer Lord** is a good game. The idea is to unite all of your forces as soon as possible and then start picking off the Shadowlord's legions quickly, before he has a chance to do likewise. In one game I tried to thrust as hard and as fast as I could into his territory to take his citadel, but was slaughtered in the process. Waging a war of attrition seems to work better.

One trick I learned, is that troops are generic. If you want to beef up a particular unit, just garrison troops in a castle and then have the leader of the unit pick them up as recruits, and those troops will all have the same racial characteristics of the unit type. For example, elves and barbarians left as a garrison and then picked up by a Rovanium unit, will all be Rovanium troops.

Name: SORCERER LORD
Type: Wargame
Format: Amiga, IBM, Atari ST
Publisher: Datasoft
Ages: 10 and above
Requirements: 512K
*** Players: One**
Price: \$34.95

Difficulty: Beginner to Advanced
Packaging: Good (8)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (9)
Playability: Good (7)

CP RATING: 7.75
Circle Reader Service Number 15.

Casey Jones Rides Again

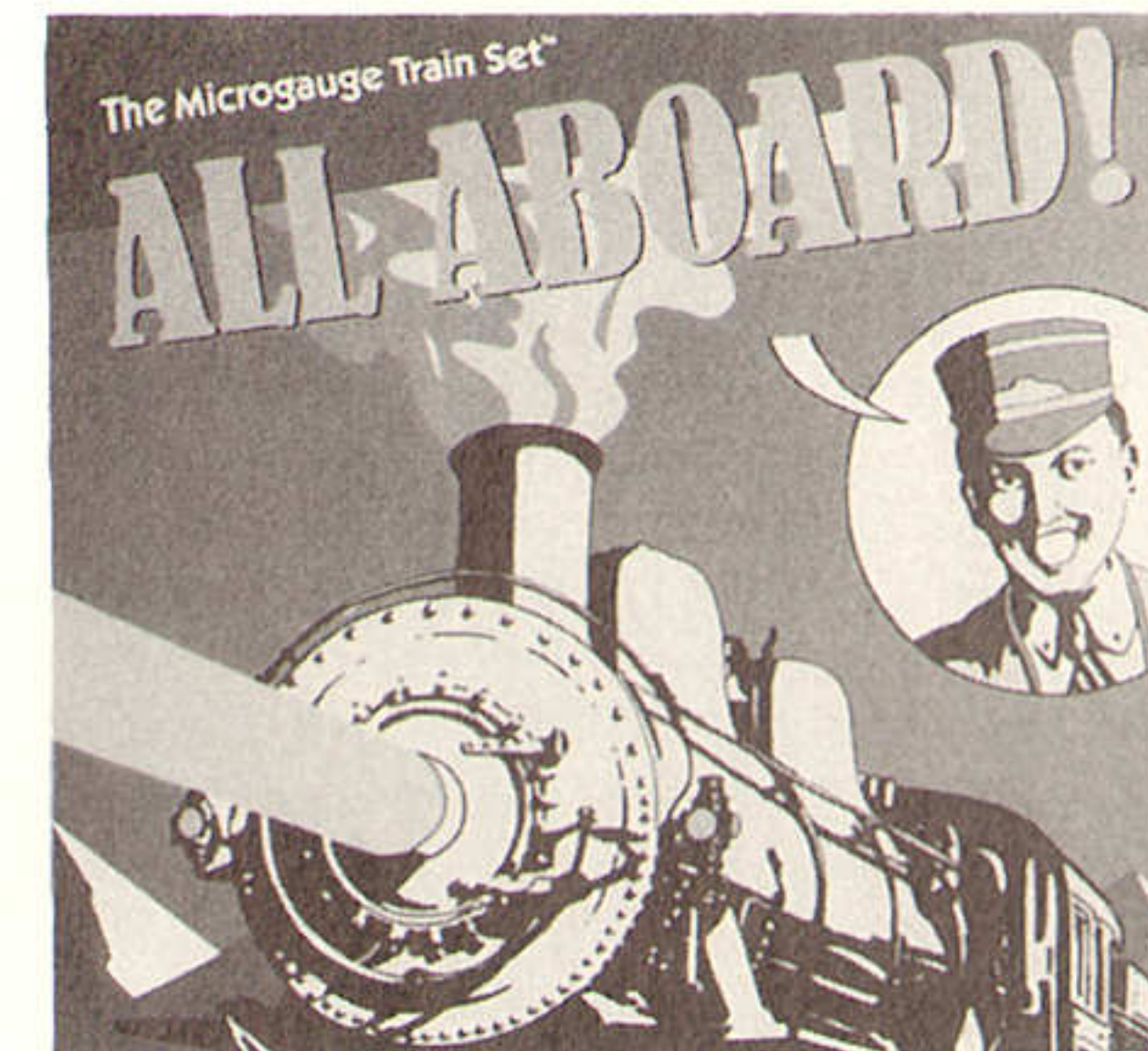
By John S. Manor

You remember the train sets that dad brought home for Christmas. He spent all day setting it up and playing with it as you waited impatiently for your turn to try it out. Now you can boot up **All Aboard!** from Terrific Software, Inc. and play with your own set of trains on your Atari ST computer.

All Aboard! offers you five sets of different trains, six kinds of scenery and six complete track layouts. When you load the program, the main screen shows a train set with old fashioned houses and trees. You have a tiny, hard-to-see, red cursor on the screen. You move it with the mouse down to the bottom of the screen to see the **All Aboard!** menu. From the menu you can pick scenery, switched and trains to place on your track layout. The first thing I did was take an engine and put it on the track to watch it run. The engine chugged along, nicely navigating the turns and loops of the track. It takes a couple of minutes to go around the whole layout. You can increase or decrease speed and even stop and then go into reverse, pushing cars instead of pulling them.

The menu shows eight cars in all, four going left and four going right. Each car will move on its own when placed on the track. You can make up trains with as many cars as you want, but long trains are very slow and are prone to accidents.

Crashes are part of the fun of **All Aboard!**. You can put two trains on the track layout, going in opposite directions, and wait for the thundering climax. Or you can put a tree or



house on a track and run a train into it. If you throw a switch and a train comes to a dead-end, the train will crash, one car at a time and destroy quite a bit of the scenery as it does.

The trains included a trolley, a handcart, and modern trains like the Red Devil. The scenery varies from winter in the country to the Big City.

You can edit scenery and create your own train cars with the **All Aboard!** editor. You draw scenery using the Degas, Neochrome or Cyber Paint painting programs and then "clip" them into the **All Aboard!** program where they become scenery and train files. You create your own train animation by making slightly different pictures of the cars.

I enjoyed playing with **All Aboard!**. It's no easy job to keep the train on the tracks and out of the scenery. You have to make sure the switches are in the proper position. This gets

interesting when you start changing the track layout as the train is rolling.

There could have been more sound in **All Aboard!**. I would have liked to be able to blow the whistle or horn on the train. Signals could have been added for more realism. But I suppose you can add your own with the editor.

The manual for **All Aboard!** is on the program disk. You have to view it or print it out. It is over ten pages long and covers the whole operation of running your train set and using the editor in a clear, easy to understand fashion.

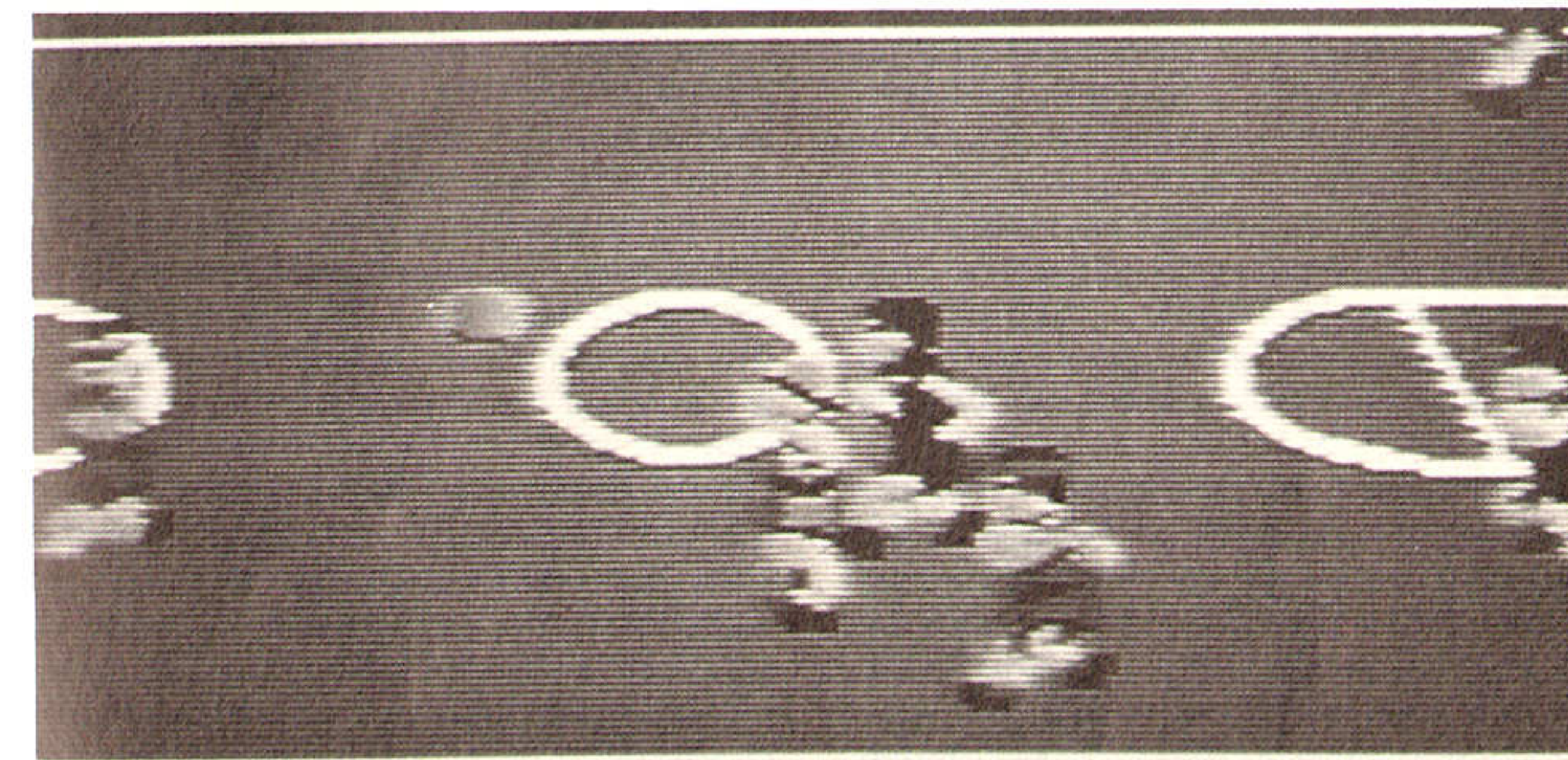
All Aboard! is a unique program for the Atari ST that is well executed. It will give the budding railroad tycoon a headstart and provide hours of pleasure as you build and run your own rail line.

Name: ALL ABOARD!
Type: Railroad simulation
Formats: Atari ST
Publisher: Terrific Software
Ages: Ten and up
Requirements: Color monitor
*** Players: One**
Price: \$24.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Good (8)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics: Good (7.5)
Realism: Good (7)
Playability: Good (7)

CP RATING: 7.31
Circle Reader Service Number 24.

Street Basketball Like the 'Old Days'



By Cheryl Peterson

Ever wish you could shoot a few hoops like you did back in the good old days? Grab a few kids, choose up sides and see who gets to 20

points first? Well, here's your chance. **Street Sports Basketball** lets you relive the good old days or create some new games of your own. And the best part is, if the weather is lousy out, it doesn't matter.

I love the concept of this game, but I have to say that the playability factor was very low for me. The joystick control of three players (with some help from the computer) just didn't work for me. I found it almost impossible to get set for a shot and put it through the basket. It was very difficult to get my player lined up on the basket and when I did, she would invariably throw the ball to another player on the team, instead of taking the basket shot. This is because the program's controls make no distinction between passing to another player and making the shot. Both actions require pressing the fire button and if one of your other players gets between you and the basket, they get the ball instead of the ball sailing toward the basket.

Unfortunately, this one aspect made the game very frustrating for me.

The sound is excellent. The graphics are great. The opening segments where you choose sides is neat. Each team consists of three players

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Advanced D&D for Your Computer

By John S. Manor

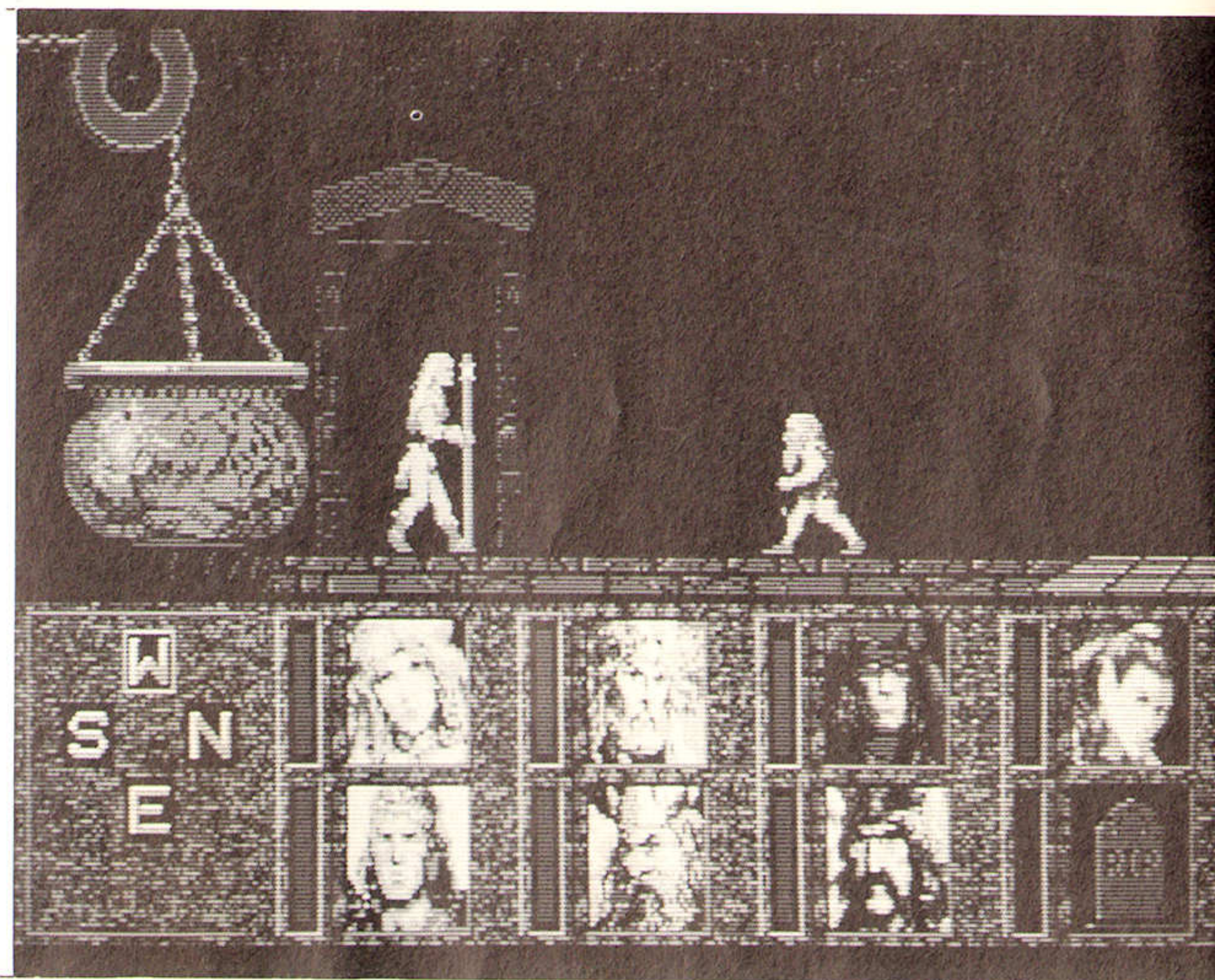
I have been playing **Heroes of the Lance**, by U.S. Gold Ltd. and SSI, for more than ten days now and I have come to love it. It is one of the best action adventure/role playing games I have seen. It combines some of the best elements of another of my favorite games (**Dungeon Master** by FTL Games) with it's own brand of adventuring, making a satisfying gaming experience.

Heroes of the Lance is based on the Advanced Dungeon and Dragons game module "DL1 Dragons of Despair", from TSR. Dungeons and Dragons is a vastly popular role playing board game where the players go through various adventures watched over by a referee or dungeon master. Moves are based on the throw of many-sided dice. **Heroes of the Lance**, however, is an action game. It's detailed, realistic and well-animated graphics (in the Atari ST version) make it a standout in this gaming genre.

In **Heroes of the Lance**, you control a party of eight characters searching for the Disks of Mishakal. You need the disks to renew the people's belief in the old Gods and save the world from the evil Queen of Darkness. The disks are located deep within the temple of Xak Tsaroth. Guarding the temple are hordes of monsters and evil human soldiers. You and your party will have your hands full as you wander through the temple. Hidden traps will add to the suspense of your adventure. A misstep could be costly.

After you boot up **Heroes of the Lance** you see the character Goldmoon, a magic staff-wielding cleric, standing inside the temple. A compass on the lower left of the screen shows any exits and your character's direction. Below the main screen are pictures of the members of your party in the order in which they were marching. The first character is shown on the screen. He will fight any monsters you encounter. The first row of four pictures are the active members of your party. This means, for example, that if the magician, Raistlin, is in the first four, he can use magic spells even though he's not on the screen. A drawback to this is that if a monster injures your leader, all of the front four characters sustain some injury. I usually put seriously injured characters in the rear four, until I can heal them.

The characters each have their own abilities and weapons. There is Tanis, a strong character who I see as the leader and who uses either a sword or bow and arrow. Sturm Brightblade is stronger still and uses a two-handed sword. Goldmoon, daughter of a tribal chieftain, carries the Blue Crystal Staff, which she can use to cast powerful clerical spells. Her lover, Riverwind accompanies her and will step to the front to protect Goldmoon if she is seriously injured while leading the party. Your party is rounded out by Tasselhoff Burrfoot, a thief who can detect traps, Flint Fireforge, an axe-wielding



dwarf, Raistlin Majere, a powerful magician and his twin brother Caramon Majere, who uses a longsword and spear.

The monsters you will encounter are as varied as they are deadly. The deadliest are the Draconians and the Dragons. Baaz Draconians look like a cross between human soldiers and dragons. They are used as soldiers and carry swords. When killed, they turn to stone and crumble to dust. Then they are full-sized Draconians who can hurl magic missiles at you. My party was wiped out several times before I managed to destroy one of these monsters. Even deadlier than the Draconians, the dragon hatchlings will pursue you relentlessly, spewing fiery acid from their mouths. They can kill even the strongest member of your party quickly. A full-grown dragon, Khisanth, guards the Disks of Mishakal. I have not found her yet but she is supposed to be the most difficult monster of all to kill, and she uses magic. Ghosts of fallen swordsmen, wraiths, giant spiders and green trolls round out the host of monsters you will face.

Heroes of the Lance uses hit points, strength, wisdom and other typical Dungeons and Dragons statistics for the characters in the game. I never paid much attention to them while playing and they can mostly be ignored if you just want to hack and slash your way through the temple. A character's overall health is shown by a colored bar next to his picture. If he's in trouble, you'll know right away.

Magic and spell casting play an important role in **Heroes of the Lance**. Goldmoon can use her Blue Crystal Staff to cure wounds, deflect dragon's breath, raise the dead, throw a spiritual

hammer (a missile) and to cast other spells. Raistlin, can use his Staff of Magius to throw magic missiles, trap an enemy in a web, detect invisible and magic objects, and to charm an enemy or put him to sleep. The Final Strike spell is just that; it unleashes all the power of the staff at once. It is so destructive I don't recommend using it unless there is nothing else you can use. The magic staffs both have limited energy, so it is best to conserve them until you get deep into the temple. Goldmoon's staff can be recharged by a magic attack, but this also seems to be a good way to get her killed.

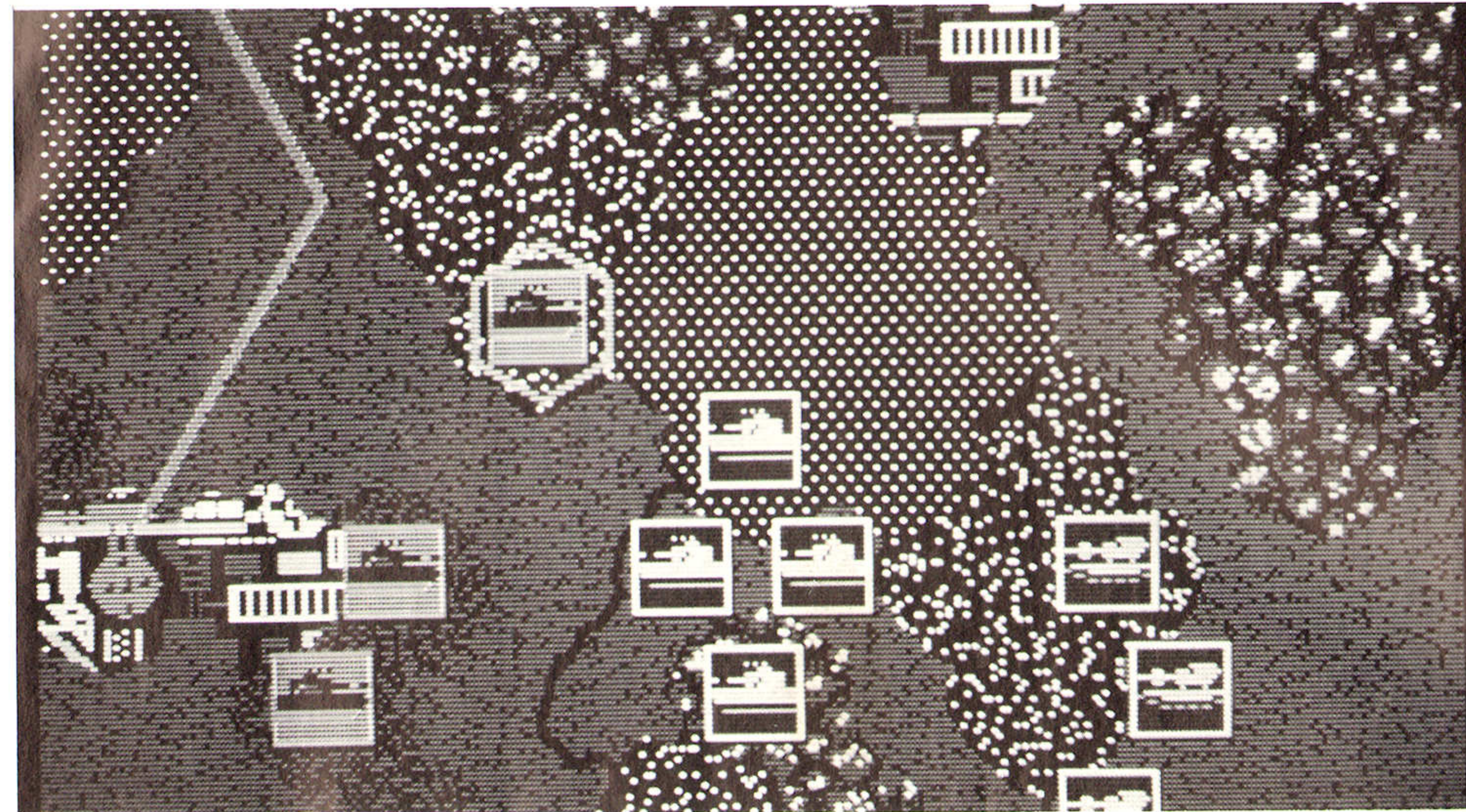
You move your on-screen character with the joystick (the IBM version allows you to use the keyboard too). he can walk left or right, enter doors or hallways, jump or run at double speed. Tanis and Goldmoon are best for running and jumping over objects. Raistlin can't run at all. I recommend using the thief, Tasselhoff, when exploring a new area of the temple. He will find and dismantle any hidden traps for you.

When you are in combat your lead character can fight "At Range" or in "Close Combat". Tanis, for example, will fire arrows at an approaching Draconian. When the monster gets close though, he will automatically draw his sword. You can make him slash low, high or center and even back off and run. When a fighter is seriously injured, I quickly switch to a healthy character. Then Goldmoon can heal him, or, if he is killed, resurrect him.

Heroes of the Lance has a menu system for entering commands. You get the main screen

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The Post-Nuclear War Zone



By Berdj Betchakdjian

The Nova Gun, firing at its maximum rate is delivering 150 nuclear shells a minute; What to do? Well, you'd better pull up a couple of your Grav Tanks, and pump a few rounds into them before they make your day a little less than pleasant. **Fire Zone** gives you not only the Nova Gun, but also Striders; these are death machines on two legs much like in the Star Wars series. The Leviathan, another death instrument, is the equivalent of a battalion of heavy tanks welded together into one moving fortress.

So, you say, what do I need these death instruments at my fingertips for? Well, it's the 21st century, and the warfare that has developed is total techno-nightmare. The Grav Tanks that can skim just above the ground can hit with lightening speed, and if you have to face these beam weapons that can hit at the speed of light, you'd better get there fast.

Speed is not necessarily the forte of every type of weapon on this battlefield, though, since heavy tanks are also present with their massive firepower, instead of the helicopter speed of the Grav Tanks. These weapons cannot be counted on for lightening offense, or counter-stroke, but when both sides are fairly out of their main weapons, the heavies can come in and take out the enemy's last remaining units.

Is there room on this battlefield for infantry? There's always room for infantry, and in this game you get a futuristic type that are pretty bad. Wearing power plasma armor, these boys

in uniform are tough. Their armament consists of X14 nuclear laser rifles that can fire armor piercing beams, or grenade blasts. They are essential to you since without infantry to hold gained ground, all you have is deep armor thrusts.

You, as the leader of your troops must also make sure that you utilize the terrain effectively. Some of the terrain, such as towns and forest, can give you cover. Other types of terrain, such as clear ground, give you greater freedom of movement than forest, but you will be easily picked off by the enemy waiting in the urban area.

This is a great game that I liked playing several times. The graphics for the unit icons are excellent on the IBM, but a little limited on the Commodore. The game is well thought out, and the concept behind it was probably written out as a short Sci-Fi story since all the elements fit so well together.

And there is a bonus with this game: Gamegen. Gamegen is the game generator that gives you the ability to create not only your own scenario, but to change the ones that come on the disk. With gamegen you can design your own map, make and place your own units, decide who goes first, set the reinforcement schedule, etc.

This probably sounds pretty complicated for the average person to master, but gamegen has a very easy to use interface. With the quick key guide, it's just a matter of pressing the right keys and a game can be put together in a relatively short period of time.

For example; if you want to change the terrain all you have to do is press the T key on the keyboard, then press one of the number keys 1-7 and the terrain that is designated to that number is put on the spot that the cursor is on. To design a unit, press the U key, then, looking at the guide again, press one of the number keys, or one of the letter keys, and you have chosen the type of unit you want, and all the attributes you wish to have. Simple.

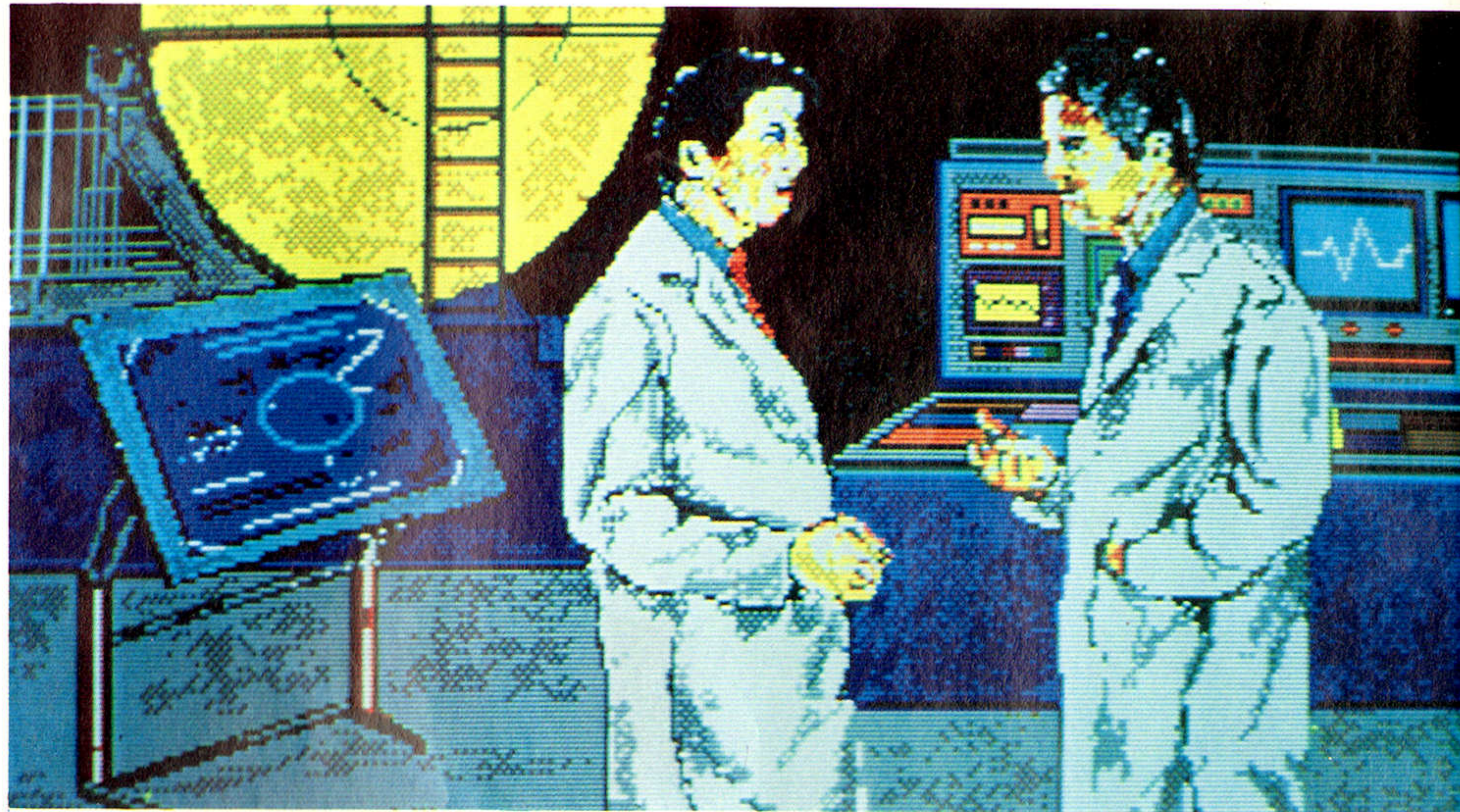
This is an excellent wargame and I will probably play it more often than I should. PSS did a very good job on this one and I am really looking forward to their next game.

Name: FIRE ZONE
Type: Strategic Wargame
Formats: IBM, C64/128, Amiga, Atari ST
Publisher: PSS
Distributor: Datasoft
Ages: 8 and above
Requirements: None
Players: One
Price: \$24.95, \$34.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Good (8)
Documentation: Good (7)
Graphics: Very Good (8.6)
Playability: Very Good (9)

CP RATING: 8.50
 Circle Reader Service Number 14.

Back to the Future



By George Fontaine

Welcome to the 21st century. The year is 2087. Chronal disturbances have threatened the time continuum. Dinosaurs have suddenly appeared on city streets. Total mayhem has developed. Adam Cooper, who is a world renowned temporal physicist, has traced the disturbances to November 22, 1963 — the assassination of John F. Kennedy. With your help, and the help of five team members, Cooper must travel back through the barriers of time and space and prevent the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

You arrive in Fort Worth, Texas on November 15, 1963, aboard the Time Sphere — a machine developed by Cooper for time travel. You assume the role of Cooper and you have one week to convince Kennedy that you are from the future and prevent him from going to Dallas where he is assassinated. The five agents that assist you in this mission are:

William Stein, Ph.D. — the great grandson of John F. Kennedy. He is an expert of the Kennedy time period. However, his diplomacy is weak, he is old, and because he is related to the Kennedy's, he can be emotional about this whole affair.

Iris Steel — as a master of combat, she is ideal for crisis situations. She is not intelligent, though, and she can be extremely moody.

Carl Czernak — a brilliant computer scientist and engineer. He has an Eastern European accent and a impatient personality.

Bridgette Cooper — daughter of Adam Cooper, she is resourceful and she has a solid background in 20th century history. Because of her age she tends to be informal and immature.

Alexander Blue — a strong diplomat and a good communicator, he is fluent in several languages. Because of his race, he may face prejudice in certain circles.

If you like text adventure games, and you like this sort of challenge, then **Guardians of Infinity** is for you. In this game, you command each agent to contact a politician or official who may help you in your quest. Assistance may be in the form of an introduction to another politician who is close to the president or security passes that will allow your agents to meet high ranking government officials. Contacting people is difficult. Often your agent may have to disclose that he is from the future in order to convince the contact of the impending danger. In this case, the contact will want proof of this claim.

Fortunately, the mission manual provides a directory of facts about various people during that time period which can be given by your agent. Even with the directory, most of your contacts will view your claim with some skepticism. The manual also includes a list of possible contacts (over 100 of them), their position in government, and a brief essay and itinerary for each individual.

Your agents will have to travel to many different cities to contact these various officials. You must take into account the traveling time

for your agents and the exact location of the contact you wish to speak to. In addition, a contact may not be accessible in his or her present location.

For example, Ann Gargan, a niece of Joseph and Rose Kennedy, lives at the Hyannis Port Compound, Mass. She is only accessible when she takes her walk on the beach during the evening hours. If you send an agent there during daylight hours, the trip will be a complete waste of time.

Talking with your agents is fairly straightforward. Here is an example of how well the parser works:

YOU: Carl

CZERNAK: Yes, Adam, what do you want me to do?

YOU: I want you to go and see Joe Politician.

CZERNAK: I don't know, Adam. Mr. Politician is a very powerful man and getting a direct meeting with him will not be easy. Are you sure you want me to try?

YOU: Yes, Carl. Try your best to see him.

CZERNAK: All right, Adam, I assume you know what your are doing. In which city is he located?

YOU: He is in Washington D.C.

CZERNAK: Where do you want me to see him, Adam?

YOU: Try and see him at his office in the State Department.

As you can see, agents will question your judgement at times. It is up to you to either take their advice, or be a firm leader and stick to your guns. This can be tricky though, because their advice can be useful in providing helpful

hints in the game. So, refusing their advice in every situation will lead to failure.

The game screen shows the present location of each agent in the form of windows. As events happen, or if an agent needs to talk to you, a window expands showing the name of the agent and his or her dialogue. You type your dialogue in a separate window which makes it easy for you to read and respond to each event.

If you are lucky enough to convince the right people of the upcoming assassination, you will be given a 15 minute meeting with the President. In this short amount of time, you must convince him of the danger and persuade him to change his plans.

None of this is easy. In fact, it's downright difficult at times. Plan on spending several months mastering this game. This, of course, depends on your skill level and the amount of time you play the game in any given session.

The authors claim that the events that happen, and the people you meet, are as historically accurate as possible. This gives the game a nice touch of realism.

Also included is a novella about Adam Cooper and the events that happen prior to the mission. In addition, a computer slide show is included on a separate disk which depicts these main events in full graphic color. Though the slide

show is not critical to the game play, it does add value to the product package.

Overall game play was rather tedious at times. I found myself constantly explaining every move to each team member, which required a lot of typing. There is very little reward or success in the beginning of the game. It literally took me hours before I sent the right agent to the right person and got back a positive result from a contact. No examples are provided on how to get started in the right direction, so it's pretty much hit or miss even with the information they give about each contact and the information provided about each agent. The dialogue windows are done very well and the parser built in to the game is excellent. Spelling in the game is critical but capitalization is not.

The novella is well written, but I found it too long — it's 90 pages. You really need to read it in order to get the full flavor of the game. The manual is well organized, but it should have tabs at each section so that you can easily find the information you need. Every contact you send your agents on requires looking up some sort of fact from the manual. For those of you who decide to purchase this game, you might try this suggestion: use Post-it notes to tab each section of the manual.

With all things considered, this is truly a

unique text adventure game with many advanced features, a good story plot, and a well written manual. It requires at least an intermediate skill level to complete it.

Name: GUARDIANS OF INFINITY: TO SAVE KENNEDY

Type: Text adventure game

Formats: IBM

Publisher: Paragon

Designers: John Antinori, F.J. Lennon and William Snyder, Ph.D.

Ages: 15 to adult

Requirements: CGA/HERCULES (CGA or EGA graphics required for slide show and color game screen), 512K RAM, 5 1/4" drive.

Players: One

Price: \$44.95

Ability Level: Intermediate to Advance

Packaging: Good (7)

Documentation: Very Good (8)

Graphics: Good (7)

Realism: Very Good (9)

Playability: Good (7)

CP RATING: 7.40

Circle Reader Service Number 34.

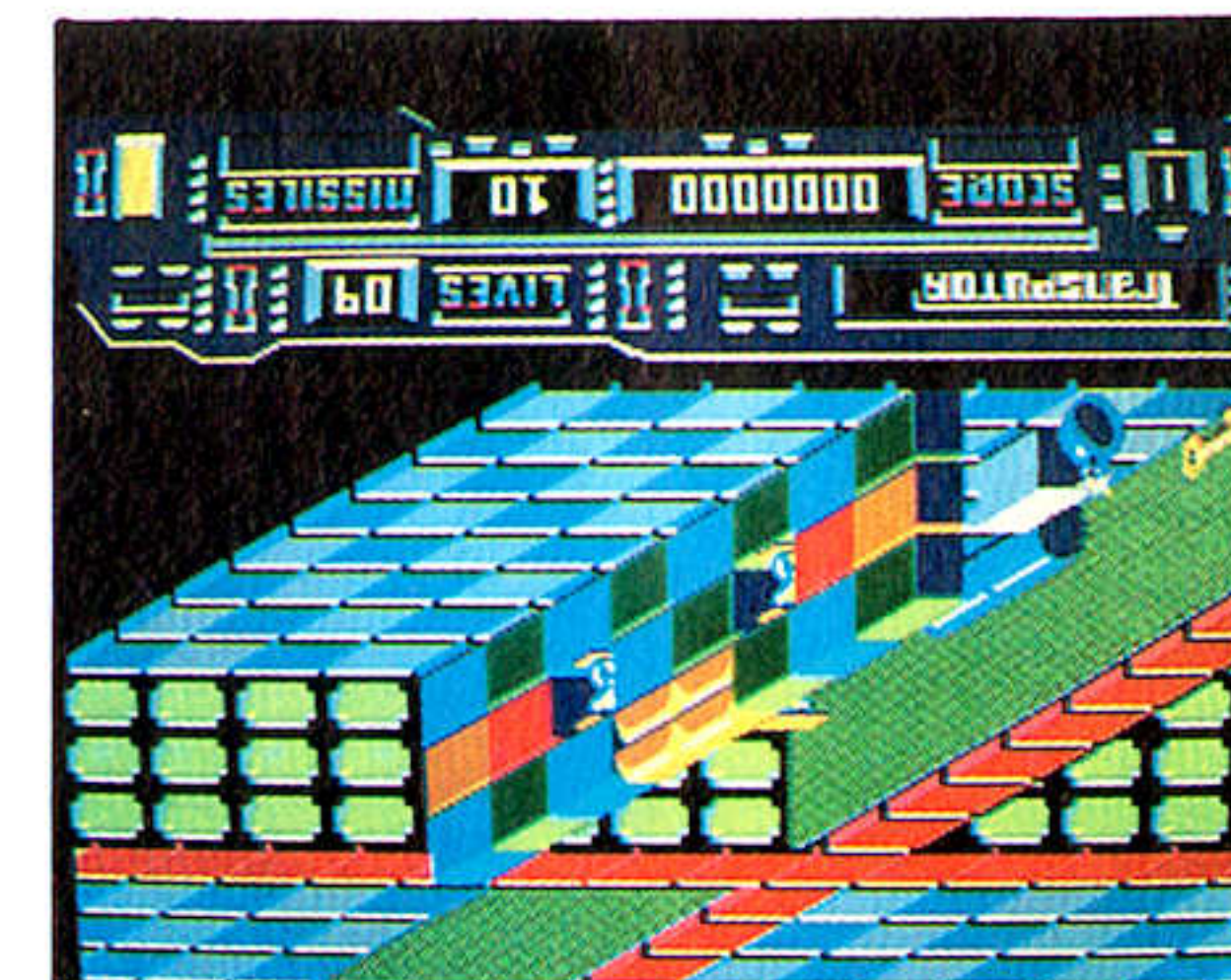
Break-out Game with Some Twists

By John S. Manor

Transputor is an imported arcade game from the CRL Group in London, England that brings a new dimension to break-out games. In break-out you destroy rows of bricks with a ball bounced off a bat. You clear a screen and move on to the next. Transputor adds fantastic animation and sound and a three-dimensional perspective to this popular game.

There are thirty-two screens full of blocks in Transputor. You look at the screen from an angle to the left and slightly above the blocks. This perspective takes a lot of getting used to and caused me to miss many balls as I misjudged where they were going.

What really makes Transputor unique though are the sound and animation. When you miss a ball it sometimes yells "Whoa!!" as it falls off the edge of a screen. It had me laughing and in stitches so I had to stop playing the game. There are certain blocks that are alive and will come at you to eat your paddle up. You have missiles to blast them and other bricks, but if they get you they'll munch on your paddle and then say "MMM, tasty!" They really know how to rub it in. Your ball looks solid and creates well-animated havoc with the rows of blocks if it gets behind them. It's a real challenge to keep it on the screen though because it some-



times moves very fast and bounces quickly.

There are thirty-two kinds of blocks, which when hit, give you points, extra missiles, more lives, a larger or smaller bat, an electric bat or blow up a row of bricks.

You can play Transputor with a joystick or the keyboard. Missiles are launched with the space bar. It's neat to watch the fiery exhaust as it races at the rows of bricks. You can also view any screen before playing it. Screens are divided into groups of four. If you like screen six, you

can choose to play it. You will start with screen five though, because it's the first screen in that group of four.

Transputor is a simple game with outstanding graphics and sound on the Atari ST. I hope this is a taste of the great games for the ST I've heard the Europeans are enjoying. Transputor will satisfy any fan of break-out games and give you plenty of arcade gaming fun for your software dollar.

Name: TRANSPUTOR

Type: Arcade breakout clone

Formats: Atari ST, Amiga

Publisher: CRL Group

Distributor: Scorpion Software

Ages: 10 and up

Requirements: Color monitor

Players: One or Two

Price: \$34.95

Ability Level: Beginner to Advanced

Packaging: Good (8)

Documentation: Good (7)

Graphics: Excellent (9.5)

Realism: Very Good (9)

Playability: Very Good (9)

CP RATING: 8.66

Circle Reader Service Number 23.

A large, pixelated illustration in a dark, textured background. At the top, a horizontal border features a repeating Greek key (meander) pattern. The central scene depicts a large, serpentine dragon with a long, coiled body and a head on the left. A small, pixelated figure of a person stands on a platform within the dragon's body. Two vertical poles or staves are positioned on either side of the figure. At the bottom, two circular yin-yang symbols are visible, one on the left and one on the right. The entire image has a low-resolution, digital-art aesthetic.

The Games: Summer Edition brings an interesting variety of competitive events to the home computer screen. There are eight events

I had the most fun with the hammer-throw event. The idea is to swing a weight suspended on a chain and launch it down the field as far as possible. Your score is based on how far it goes. You start by rocking the hammer back and forth, go into a wind up over your head then

I found the uneven parallel bars and ropes to be complex events. There are diagrams in the manual that show you how to execute a series of moves, one into another. It takes a lot of



Kick and Punch To Save Mariko

By Rawson L. Stovall

The last time I watched a real karate movie (you know, with the English dubbed in) was a little over a year ago when I was sick and there was nothing else on television. I mean, I watched the movie only because it was late night, I couldn't go to sleep and it was too late to call anyone. I mean, they're not that bad. It's just that, as karate movies go, I would rather watch 'The Karate Kid'.

Karateka by Broderbund for the Atari ST is much like a movie in that it fades to black when fading in and out of different scenes. The game also includes a very suspenseful soundtrack and an active storyline. Broderbund first came out with **Karateka**, one of the first karate games, in 1984 for the Atari 400/800 computers, and since then it has been available for nearly every major computer system.

The storyline behind **Karateka** is a classic plot of villain-kidnaps-princess and hero-comes-and-saves-her. The story begins, "High atop a craggy cliff, guarded by an army of fierce warriors, stands the fortress of the evil Akuma.

Deep in the darkest dungeon of the castle, Akuma gloats over his lovely captive, the lovely Princess Mariko.

"You are one trained in the way of karate: a Karateka. Alone and unarmed you must defeat Akuma and rescue the beautiful Mariko. Put fear and self concern behind you. Focus your will on your objective, accepting death as a possibility. This is the way of the Karateka."

In the game, the player assumes the role of the hero who is on his way to rescue the beautiful princess. The player can run, bow (I haven't found any use for bowing yet), advance, retreat or fight. When fighting, the player can punch or kick high, medium, or low against an opponent. The opponents are the various castle guards - each one is harder and has a different fighting style than the previous guard. Also, the player can only withstand a limited number of hits. When he gets hit too much, then he dies and the lovely Princess Mariko is doomed. I guess heroes don't always win.

The graphics in **Karateka** are unbelievable. They are so crisp, so clear, so colorful, and they animate so smoothly that it almost does look

like a real action sequence in a movie. The game also features a great movie-like score that adds a little suspense to the game. The music is simple, but then, so was the music to *Jaws*.

The main problem with **Karateka**, however, is that its gameplay is very limited. All you do is run and kick or hit a guy to death. After that you run to another guy and kick or hit him to death. Broderbund has done an excellent job with this sequence but that is the entire game and quickly becomes boring.

Broderbund could have done so much more with this game. There could have been different scenes, weapons, or at least more karate moves (besides kick and punch). They even could have added an element of adventure to this game by scattering objects such as keys, medicine, or secret scrolls around.

In 1984, **Karateka** was a great game. Since then, there have been so many better games that **Karateka** just doesn't compare any more. Broderbund could have improved **Karateka**, but they didn't.

Another problem with **Karateka** for the ST is that it is almost impossible to control with a joystick. That didn't pose any problem with me because I can adapt easily to playing it on the keyboard. But, nothing can make up for the convenience and ease of use of a joystick.

The entire game has a sort of cinematic, suspenseful feel. The crisp graphics, smooth animation, and eerie music rally add to the game. Overall, though, **Karateka** is a limited game. Broderbund has made basically no changes in the gameplay since 1984. It was a great game then, but now there's just too much to it.

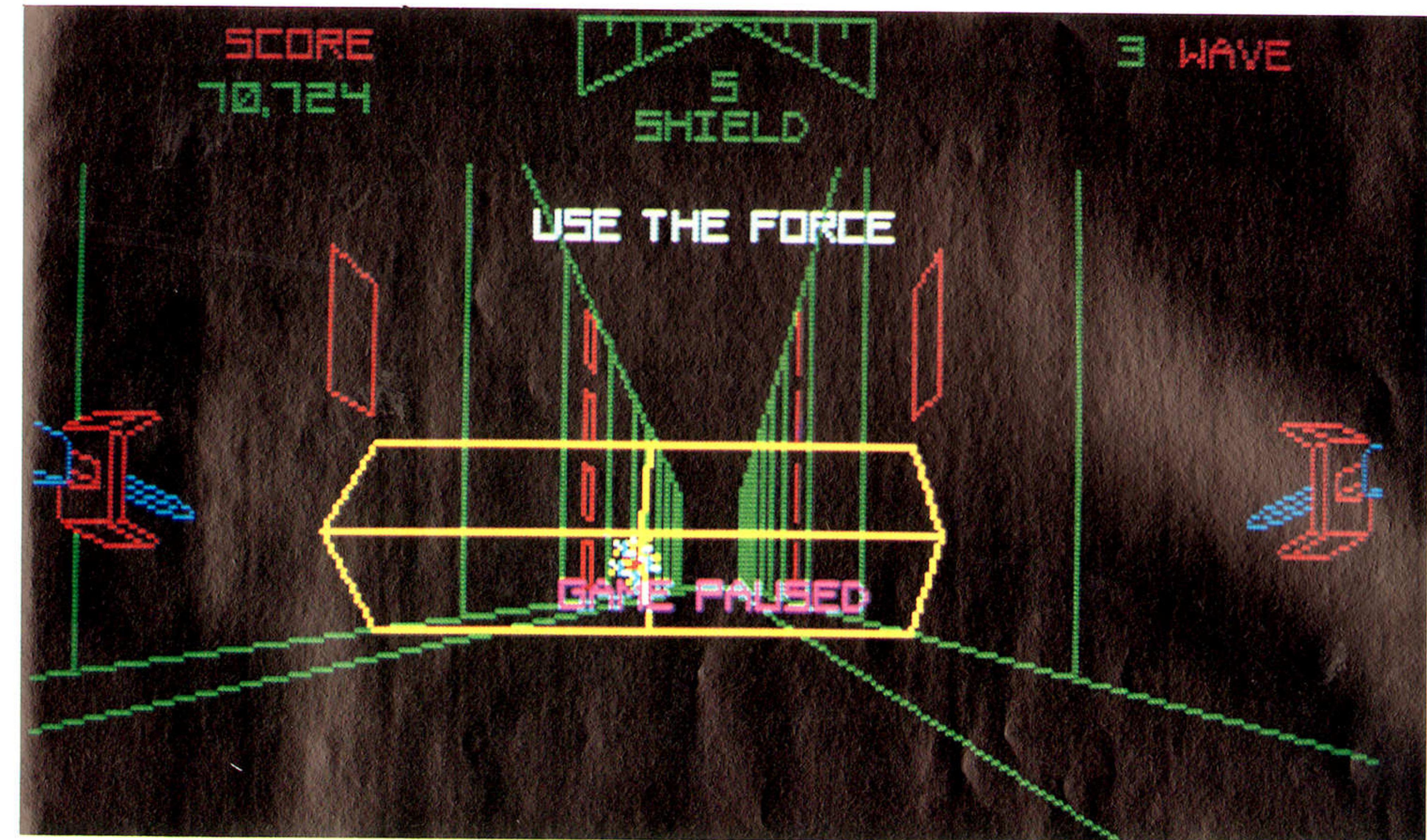
Karateka is similar to one of those English-dubbed Japanese karate movies. The first few you see can be kind of entertaining. After that, however, everything becomes a bit repetitious and finally boring. Banzai!

Name: KARATEKA
Type: Action
Formats: Most major computer systems
Publisher: Broderbund Software, Inc.
Designer: Jordan Mechner
Requirements: ST: color monitor
Ages: 8 and up
Players: One
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Very Good (7)
Documentation: Average (6)
Graphics: Excellent (10)
Playability: Average (6)

CP RATING: 7.25
Circle Reader Service Number 41.

May The Force Be With You



By Peter M. Sheppard

Remember that last battle sequence of the original "Star Wars" movie? Luke Skywalker had to fight his way into the Death Star's trench and, using the force, blow it up. Well, thanks to Broderbund Software, you can relive that experience through the arcade classic **Star Wars!** This is an exact replica of the coin-operated game that enjoyed popularity in video arcades across America a few years back.

You are the intrepid Luke Skywalker, leader of Princess Leia's Rebel Force attack wings. Your mission is to fly your X-Wing fighter through the gauntlet of three different scenarios and manage to destroy Darth Vader's Death Star. First you have to fend off waves of Tie fighters sending fireballs at you, crippling your shields. Then, wend your way over the satellite's surface, blasting the white laser tower tops above and red laser bunkers below. Finally, you barrel roll into the trench, avoiding the catwalks, destroying the laser turrets on either side, and sending two bursts into the exhaust port to blow up the Death Star.

Sounds real easy, huh? Well, that's one of the beauties of this game. The real secret is to concentrate on hitting all of the fireballs coming your way. Though you can still hit the Tie fighters, it's best to stop all of the fireballs first. Remember to hold the trigger down on your joystick or mouse to avoid the dreaded "button burnout"! You must conserve as many shield

points as possible to have any success in the later scenarios. Also, the more images on the screen there are to shoot at, the slower the game will play, so concentrate your shots whenever possible. You must avoid the towers in the second scenario or risk losing shield points.

Here again, concern yourself with the incoming fire more than the targets and you'll make it through this sequence. You'll always get ample opportunities to destroy them after the first pass and get a bonus. When down in the trench many of the enemy's shots can be dodged, which is good to know when avoiding the catwalks in your path.

Unless you are on your last shield point, you can afford to ram through a few of these structures without dying. Then drop down to the deck, center on your target, fire two blasts into the exhaust port, and pull up. Whatever you do, don't forget to pull up, or you'll lose more shield points.

I remember that the coin-op version of **Star Wars** was just as easy to learn how to play as this one is, which made for an enjoyable game for the money. But that was then, and this is now! There have been a lot of improvements in graphics for video games but none have been implemented here. This can be very disappointing to some people who appreciate a fresh approach to an older game. The 'stick' graphics make it difficult to gauge how close you are to certain barriers. However, there is

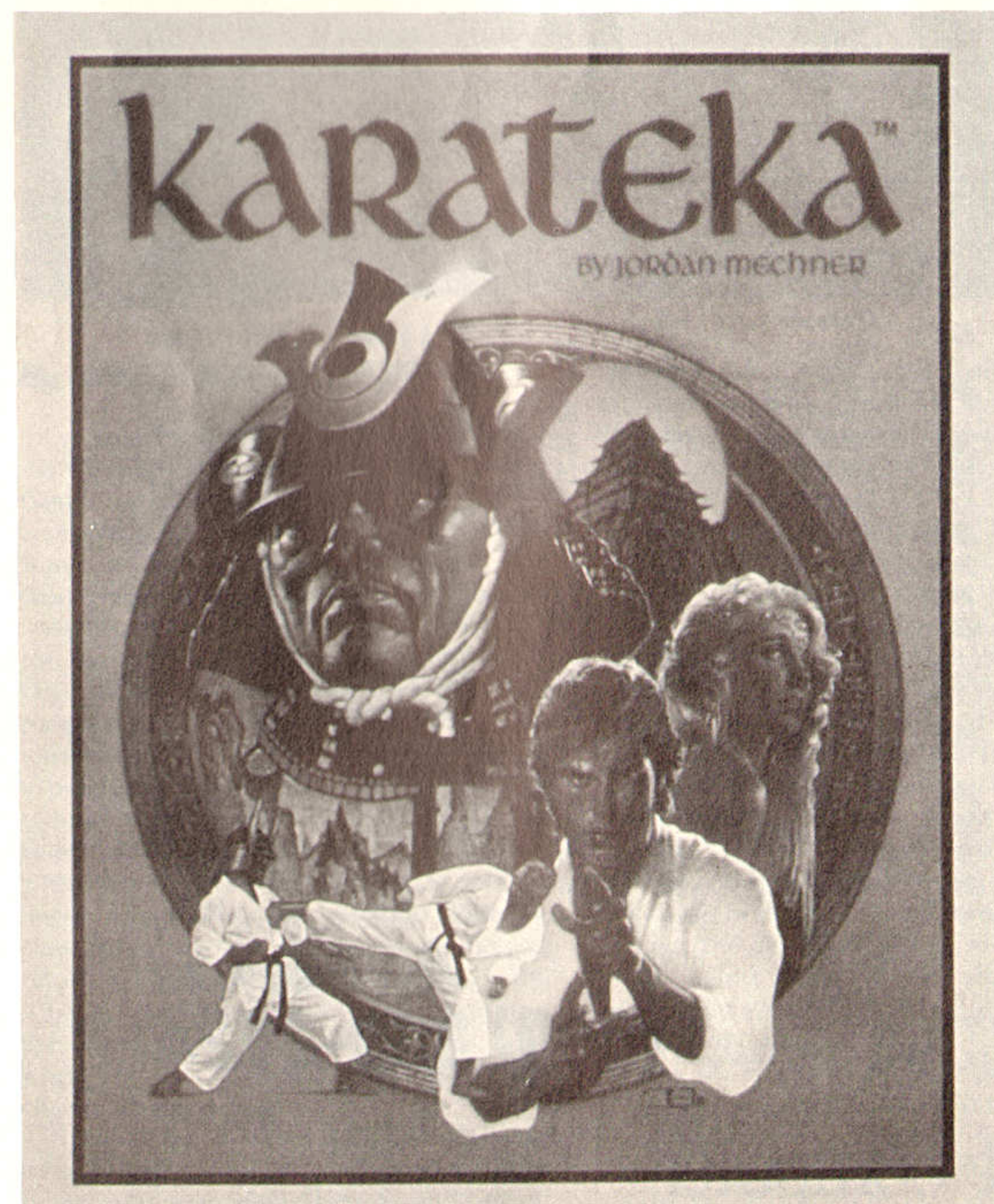
an option to switch between two different joystick controls on the vertical axis, which is about the only thing in the game that's new. Personally, I'd like to see other adaptations of the **Star Wars** movies into an arcade game, one with better graphics and more of a challenge. But for those who enjoyed the original coin-op version, and would like to have it in their archives, I'd say go for this one.

Remember, Luke, may the force be with you! Always!

Name: STAR WARS
Type: Arcade
Format: C64/128, Atari ST, Amiga, IBM
Publisher: Broderbund
Designer: Domark, Ltd.
Ages: 8 and above
Requirements: Joystick or Mouse
Players: One
Price: \$39.95

Difficulty: Beginner-Intermediate
Packaging: Average (6)
Documentation: Average (6)
Graphics/Text: Fair (4)
Realism: Average (6)
Playability: Good (7)

CP RATING: 6.25
Circle Reader Service Number 18.



Gatekeeping to Confine Chaos



By James V. Trunzo

If there was an official Software Hall of Fame, Wizardry from Sir-Tech Software would be a charter member. The first piece of programming that could legitimately call itself a fantasy role-playing game, Wizardry was a valid reason to buy an Apple computer. Now, after three sequels that say the arch-villain Werdna defeated, banished and finally resurrected, **Wizardry V: Heart of the Maelstrom** debuts on the IBM and continues the tradition of its predecessors.

Wizardry V is a stand-alone scenario with its own storyline, although you can transfer your characters from other Wizardry games to Wizardry V if you so desire. In Heart of the Maelstrom your party of six embark upon a grand three-part quest.

First you must locate a High Priest of the Brotherhood who will provide you with the necessary information to descend into the

depths of the Temple Maze. Next, you must journey through the multiple levels of the Maze in order to find and defeat the evil Sorn who has imprisoned the Gatekeeper and created a cosmic rift, allowing Chaos to enter the world. Finally, you must free the Gatekeeper, for it is he alone who holds the power to mend the rift and confine Chaos to its own plane of existence.

Wizardry V boasts a complete revision of the Wizardry gaming system, which is, for the most part, true. However, most of the changes were necessary simply to elevate Wizardry to the level of other fine role-playing games like Bard's Tale, Might & Magic and Ultima, all of which had surpassed Wizardry in terms of graphics and sophistication. The enhancements to Wizardry V now place it on par with the best of the genre (in all areas save graphics) and adds several innovative twists to boot.

Character classes remain the same, both in number, type and method of generation.

However, the thief and ninja classes now hide and ambush enemies and attempt to pick locks, standards in other fantasy games but new to Wizardry. More important, your party can now add non-playing characters to the group to aid it in its quest. Demons can be summoned to fight for you and NPC's whom you meet in your explorations will ally themselves with your party, a necessity in order to complete the game.

Proof of the added depth of Wizardry V is demonstrated by not only the increased size of the program (the mazes are twice as large as any previous scenario) but also in the additional options available during encounters. Not everyone you meet in the Maelstrom will be out to destroy you; there are some delightful characters with whom you'll come into contact who will have either information or items which may be of great benefit. New commands

36 ►

◀ 26

by hitting the space bar. The commands include: hero select, magic user spells, clerical staff spells, use, take, give, drop, save game, restore game, score and exit menu. You make selections with the joystick. Hero select lets you change the order of the characters in your party and put any one of them on the play screen. I often switch to a character with a bow and arrow or a sling to attack a monster at long range, then switch back to a strong, sword-carrying character to finish him off. The Magic user spells command lets you select which spell Raistlin will use and clerical user spell does the same for Goldmoon, or whoever holds her staff. The use, take, give and drop commands relate to objects you may find in the temple. When you find scrolls, 'take' them and 'give' them to Raistlin. He can then 'use' it the next time he casts a spell.

I had a great time playing Heroes of the Lance. It's a challenging game that I have yet to finish. I liked the way the characters were animated and used a variety of weapons. There's strategy involved in dealing with the temple's defenders. The Draconians seemed nearly invincible at first, until I used Raistlin to catch them in a web, the Tanis to dispatch them with his sword. With the dragon hatchlings, I used Goldmoon's deflect dragon's breath spell and then had Raistlin zap them with magic missiles.

The manual for Heroes of the Lance was easy to read and clearly described all the aspects of the game. It gives some background information on Dungeon's and Dragons games and on the characters and monsters in the game.

Heroes of the Lance is a neat action game with plenty of flashing swords and smoldering magic spells. The battles with the monsters of Xak Tsaroth are intense. Navigating the rooms and hallways of the temple to reach the Disks of Mishakal will test the mettle of any adventurer. Heroes of the Lance is a must-have if you want a game that will challenge you hour after hour. I recommend it for arcade and adventure gamers alike.

Name: HEROES OF THE LANCE

Type: Action/Adventure

Formats: Atari ST, IBM, Amiga, C64/128

Publisher: Strategic Simulations, Inc.

Designer: Laurence H. Miller

Ages: 12 to Adult

Requirements: Color monitor, joystick (Atari ST version), 256K for IBM with EGA or CGA color card.

*** Players:** One

Price: Atari ST, IBM, and Amiga \$39.95, C-64 \$29.95

Ability Level: Intermediate to Advanced

Packaging: Good (8)

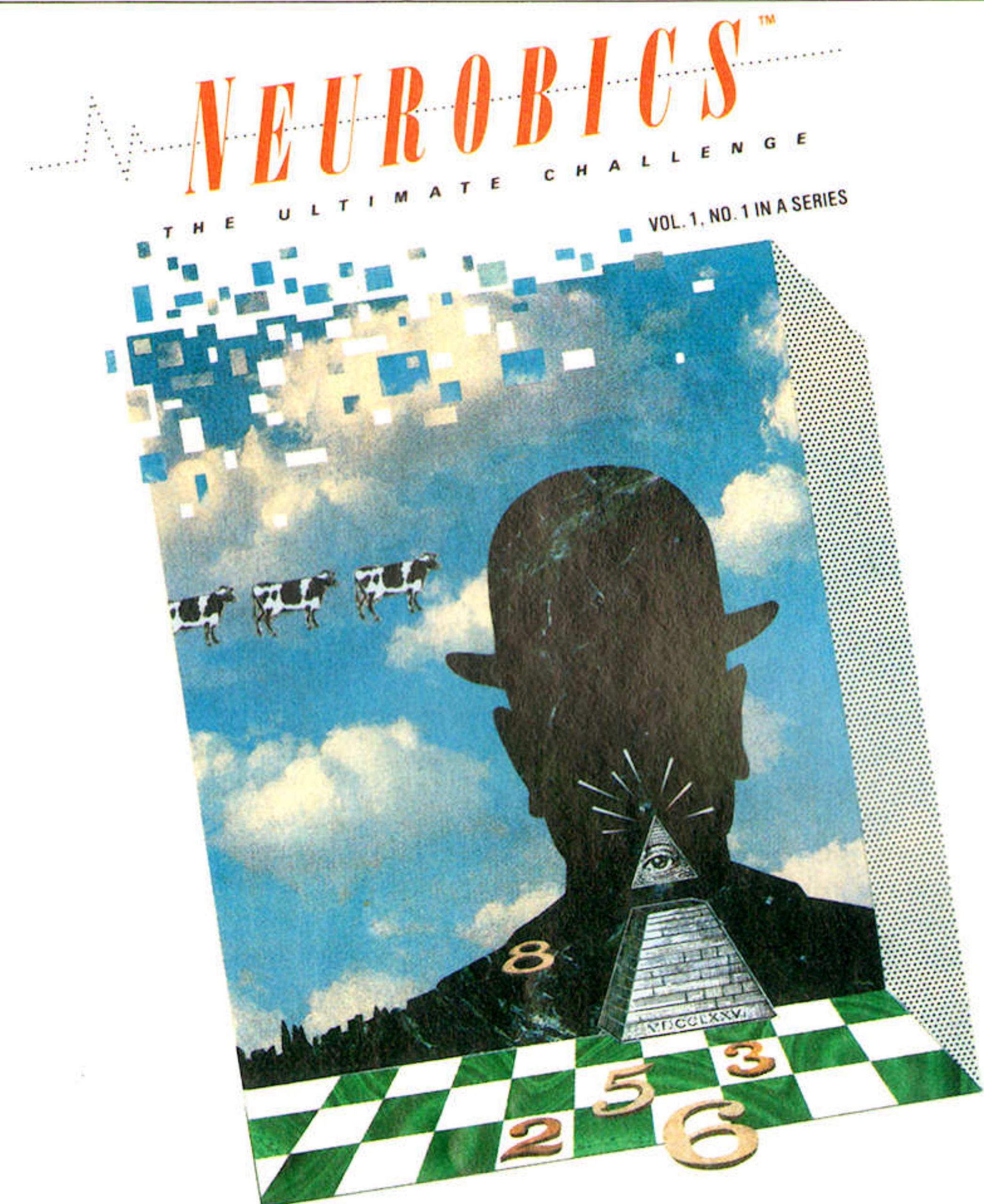
Documentation: Very Good (9)

Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.5)

Playability: Very Good (9)

CP RATINGS: 9.03

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chosen from the ten players available. There are three girls and seven boys with varying skills. As you play them, you get a better idea of each one's assets.

Flipping a coin to see who picks first is also great. You can name your team whatever you like. You have a choice of four different basketball courts to play on; the school play ground, a back alley, a street out in the suburbs or a parking lot. You can play in one or two player modes. In one player mode, you take on the computer at one of three levels; easy, intermediate or hard. You can choose how many points you are going to play to. The default is 20.

As I said, the game is great, right up until the time you start playing. The player you control is wearing a brighter colored uniform than the others. You maneuver by pushing the joystick

in the direction you want to move. Pushing the fire button will either pass or shoot at the basket, depending on the direction your player is facing. It would have been nice if a double click on the fire button would have meant shoot at the basket. As it is, the controls are barely tolerable.

Like many other Epyx games, I had trouble playing it with any external peripherals plugged into my Amiga 1000. I got terminal error messages unless I unplugged both my hard drive and my external drive. Of course, this means I won't play the game again once this review is finished. It's just too much trouble.

Though I love the Street Sports concept, this one just didn't grab me. Those who are real basketball freaks will undoubtedly want to add this one to their collections. Others who are only casually interested in basketball may want to pass this one by.

Name: STREET SPORTS BASKETBALL
Type: Sports Simulation
Formats: Amiga, Apple II, C64, IBM
Publisher: Epyx
Designer: Andrew Spencer
Ages: All
Requirements: Joystick recommended
Players: One or Two
Price: \$19.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Average (6)
Documentation: Average (6)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (9)
Realism: Good (7)
Playability: Fair (4)

CP RATING: 5.24
Circle Reader Service Number 39.

allow your group to converse, buy, sell, trade or even steal from those whom you encounter.

Combat in Wizardry V has also been upgraded to allow for more options and a somewhat higher level of strategic involvement. Range weapons are now a factor, making back row characters more functional and correspondingly more important. Likewise, monsters may now materialize behind the party or simply, in the case of giant creatures, "step over" front liners and attack vulnerable mages and priests.

Monsters on the whole are more deadly and capable of more actions, balancing the obvious advantages gained by the player's characters under the new revisions; and numerous new monsters have been added, each with certain abilities that make them interesting and challenging and not simply the same old creature with a different picture and a different name.

Wizardry V's claim that it uses a "unique and totally new magic system" is an exaggeration. True, new spells do make an appearance in both the mage and priest spell books; however, the system of use remains identical to previous Wizardry scenarios; and as far as this reviewer could tell, many of the new spells are virtually one-on-one replacements for other spells, at least in their ultimate effect. This isn't to imply that the magic employed isn't interesting, realistic or powerful. It's just not new.

Wizardry V: Heart of the Maelstrom hit the bullseye in one area but missed the target completely in a similar one. Unlike other Wizardry scenarios, Wizardry V allows the game to be saved while the party is inside the Maze, a huge improvement over the time-consuming and annoying method previously used: exiting the dungeon before a playing session could be ended.

Where the programmer's missed the mark deals with the party itself, especially the spellcasters. When characters begin to lose Hit Points which determine life or death and spellcasters use their quota of spells (which

usually occurs much quicker than does the loss of HP), there is little option but to return to the Castle and rest at the Inn. While there is a certain realism to this, it forces frequent trips back and forth from the Castle to the Maze, especially in the early going.

Many adventure games allow the party to make camp and rest within the "dungeon" itself, allowing for prolonged forays that simply aren't possible in Heart of the Maelstrom. Wizardry does have a Camp option, but it fails to incorporate a rest and heal feature or allow for the renewal of spell points.

One might argue that by doing so, the game designers would have eliminated the need to leave the Maze. However, that would not have been the case. Characters would still have had to return to the Castle to advance levels, purchase new equipment, have curses removed, resurrect unfortunate party members and identify magical items.

To be fair, the above drawback is alleviated somewhat by the inclusion of magic pools that can restore some spell points and the availability of potions and spells that heal wounds and cure poison, etc. Still, a simpler method would have, if nothing else, accelerated play.

Graphically, the improvements cited are a mixed bag. On one hand, the various inhabitants of the Maelstrom are displayed larger (often taking up almost 75% of the screen) and in much more detail, enhancing the realism of the program. In addition, splashes of color adorn the monsters and special areas like magical squares, pools, etc.

On the other hand, the dungeon walls are still 3-dimensional line drawings, creatures are not animated in anyway, and even with an EGA or VGA card, one could hardly say that the graphics are spectacular. The bottom line is that the graphics in Wizardry V offer a good, functional portrayal of what you are facing, without being cartoonish or amateuristic.

To end this review on a positive note - which it should be, because in spite of a shortcoming here and there, Wizardry V is a very good program - a few nice touches have been

included in Heart of the Maelstrom. Magic pools appear throughout the Maze and characters are now rated for their ability to swim. The better you can swim, the deeper you can go; and the deeper you go, the more likely you are to discover something. Gems and gold sink, you know.

Another feature added to Wizardry V allows the character to "dig" for possible hidden treasure and search for secret doors. Whether prompted by a clue or prodded by a hunch, digging where you stand might uncover a magic item that lay beneath the rubble of the Maze; while careful searching of the walls, instead of the ground, can result in the discovery of secret doors. These new features give a better "dungeon exploration" feel to the game.

Wizardry V comes on three copyable disks, with the program employing a booklet of passwords printed on the Nocopi paper as a form of protection from pirating. Oddly enough, Sir Tech provides no method for installing the program on a hard drive.

Name: WIZARDRY V:
HEART OF THE MAELSTROM
Type: Fantasy role-playing game
Formats: IBM, Apple II
Publisher: Sir-Tech Software, Inc
Designers: Andrew Greenberg
& D.W. Bradley
Ages: 14 and above
Requirements: Vary with system
Players: One to Six
Price: \$49.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Very Good (8.5)
Documentation: Excellent (9.5)
Graphics/Text: Good (7.5)
Realism: Excellent (9)
Playability: Very Good (8.5)

CP RATING: 8.60
Circle Reader Service Number 38.

opportunity to fly in formation with the Blue Angels and with the Thunderbirds. In addition, an audio cassette will accompany the product. This tape features Yeager himself talking about flying and guiding you through various maneuvers and courses.

More from Electronic Arts: **Demon Stalker**, for the PC, **Weaver Comissioner's Disk** for Amiga, a new version of Weaver for the PC with better batter/pitcher confrontation, Weaver for the Apple II, **Bard's Tale I** for the Mac, **Caveman Ugh-lympics** for the PC, **Mars Saga** for the PC, **Ferrari Formula One** for ST and PC, **Star Flight** for C64, **Chessmaster 2100** for Amiga and Mac, **Life and Death** (the graphic surgical simulation) for the Ilgs and Amiga, **Reel Fish'n** from Interstel--bass fishing simulation that lets you choose lures, poles, lakes and even enter contests--**Global Commander**

from Datasoft for the PC, **The Android Decision** for the ST and C64 **Time and Magik** for Apple II, also **Lancelot** for the Apple II. From SSI, **Battles of Napoleon**, for the PC, **Hillsfar** for the C64 and PC; from SSG, **Halls of Montezuma** for the Mac, Ilgs and Amiga by June and another game tentatively titled **Fire King**. Virgin Games is coming out with **Monopoly** for the PC and ST, **Scruples**, **Risk** and **Clue**. First Byte is introducing a new line of products: **Story Teller** (children insert words and animations to create stories) for PC, Amiga, Ilgs and Mac, also **Puzzle Story** book and **Rhyming Notebook**.

Broderbund should be shipping their highly acclaimed **VCR Companion** for the PC. VCR Companion lets you add titles, credits, animations and special effects to your own video tapes. It will support both CGA and EGA resolutions. Also **Downhill Challenge** is coming for the Ilgs, Amiga and C64. And, finally, look for **Star Wars** for the Amiga and ST.

Accolade is releasing **The Duel: Test Drive 2** on the PC, Amiga, Ilgs and C64. In this game, you race against another car--a Ferrari F40 against a Porche 959. Two accessory disks will also be released. One contains **The Super Cars**, a 1989 Corvette ZR1 (a brand new car that Chevrolet is releasing in March), 1988 Lotus Turbo Esprit, Ferrari

Testarosa, Poeche 911 and a 1988 Lamborghini Countach 5000S. Nice wheels! On accessory disk number two, you will get a race down the coastline of California. The race is divided into six legs, beginning at the Oregon border and passing through the Trees of Mystery, Eureka, Rockport, San Francisco, Carmel and ending in Santa Barbara (sorry LA and San Diego, I guess the designers decided to settle down in Santa Barbara). Also, Accolade is releasing the first course disk for the Jack Nicklaus game, **Jack Nicklaus Presents the Major Championship Courses of 1989** for the PC and C64. More releases: **TKO** for the PC, **4th and Inches** for the Mac, and a new combat flight simulator **F86** for the PC. In F86, you fly authentic missions in this Korean War jet.

I mentioned Marvel comic characters earlier in this column. Well, Data East is going DC. Their **Batman** product should be out on the C64 and ST. This arcade adventure features some puzzle solving, providing both thinking and action in abundance. **Bad Dudes**, the punch out coin-op favorite should be released on the PC and C64, as should **Super Hang On** for the PC and Mac. **RoboCop** is supposed to be so hard that they even paste a warning on the outside of the package. Talk about a challenge! The first versions of RoboCop are on the C64, but the PC version is coming.

Sierra is looking to release **Hoyle's Book of Games** on the PC and ST. By the way, if you are checking into a hotel at Cannes, or Munich, or Geneva, or London, you might run into some of Sierra's designers on tour to promote their games in Europe. Al Lowe is just back from two weeks in Germany and England, and others may follow.

Discovery Software should have released **Arkanoid Construction Kit** for the Mac by this time. Now you can create your own levels in this sophisticated breakout game. You can edit brick patterns and backgrounds as well, even importing MacPaint type graphics. **Arkanoid II: The Revenge of Doh** should be out on the Amiga. This game is very different from other Arkanoid type games, featuring lots of new abilities, twice as many power capsules, moving bricks, enhanced stereo sounds and tracer

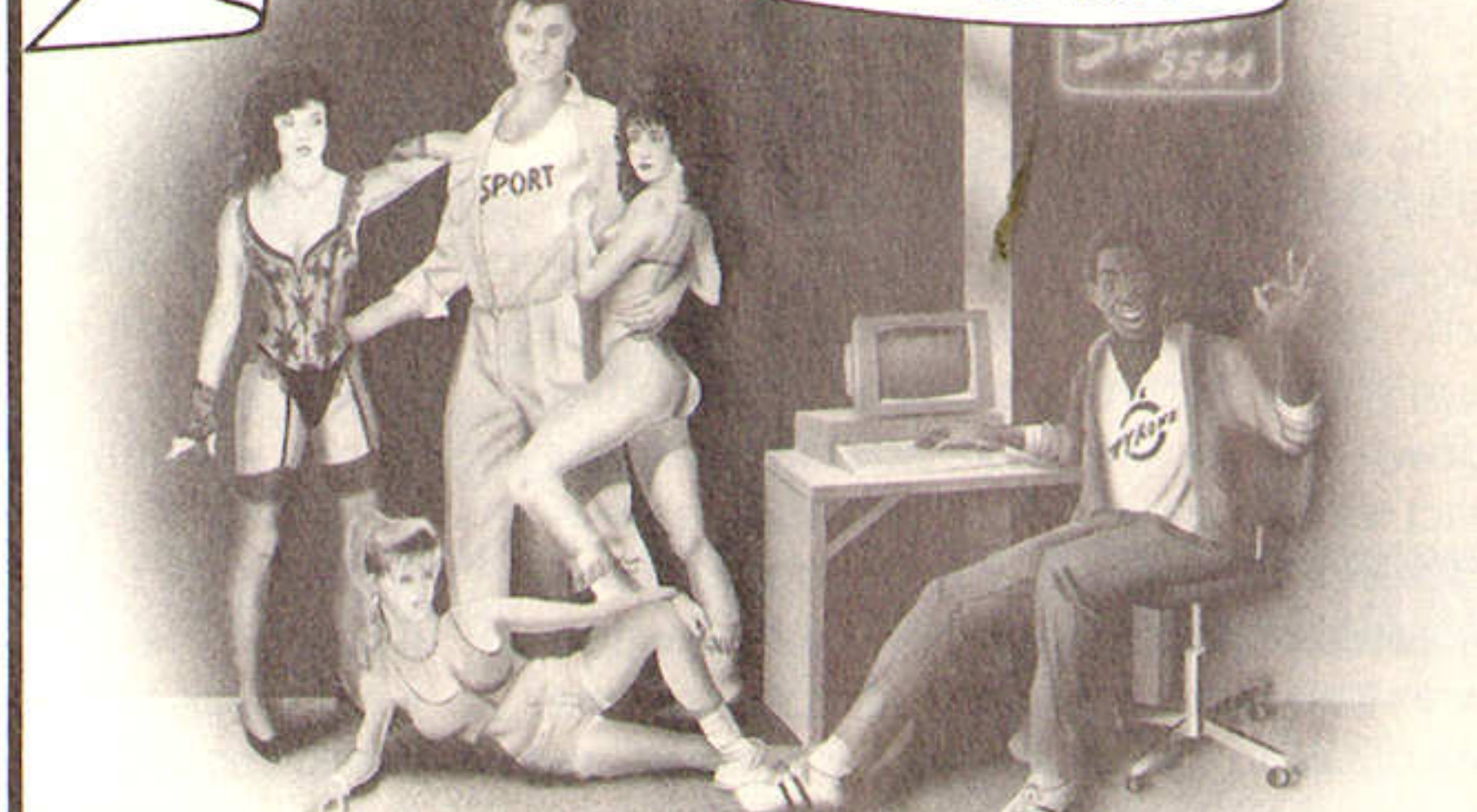
balls. **Go for the Gold** an Olympic sports simulation featuring high resolution graphics on the C64, PC and Amiga will follow. Go for the Gold features High Diving, 100 Meter Sprint, 110 Meter Hurdles, Long Jump, Archery and two weight lifting categories. The game features crowds, judges, etc. You control the athletes, down to their musculature, giving you lots of control, according to a Discovery spokesman. **Officer Candidate School (OCS)** is another upcoming release with one or two player modes (but probably not head to head) with five categories. In this simulation you will qualify in parachute, obstacle course, marksmanship, hand-to-hand combat, grenade throwing and more. Should be released in May

on PC and in September for Amiga. Discovery also has **WOW! (Women of Wrestling)**, a June title on the PC and probably October for the Amiga. This game will include both arcade and strategy aspects, moves like the Atomic Drop, Irish Whip and Pile Driver, and plenty of different wrestlers.

360 Pacific is announcing an exciting new title, called **Iroc**. This driving game will feature some very accurate modelling of the characteristics of the car, very smooth 3D animation, and lots of other realistic details. The game will include four real Iroc race tracks, ten cars to choose from, and plenty of action, you against the computer. Iroc will be out on the PC and then the Amiga, but don't look for it until at least August.

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Kudos and a Tip

I write this letter in reply to a letter sent by Kelly Konechny in your January issue. Kelly asked for a hint for the game Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders. Being a great fan of the game, I couldn't resist helping a fellow gamer in need.

To open the Mars door, you will have to: Give the golf club from the pawn shop to the tribal leader in Zaire. He will then dance for you. Record what everyone does and the order they do it. Now, switch to a person on Mars and have the person get the ladder from the hostel. Use the ladder on the big door. Now, perform the dance the tribesman did using the buttons. For

example, during the dance, the man on the left bends down, then the middle man, then the right man. You would push the left button, then the middle button, then the right. The door will open, hopefully.

Have fun!
Ken Cavanaugh
Drexel Hill, PA

And The Winner Is...

By Rusel DeMaria

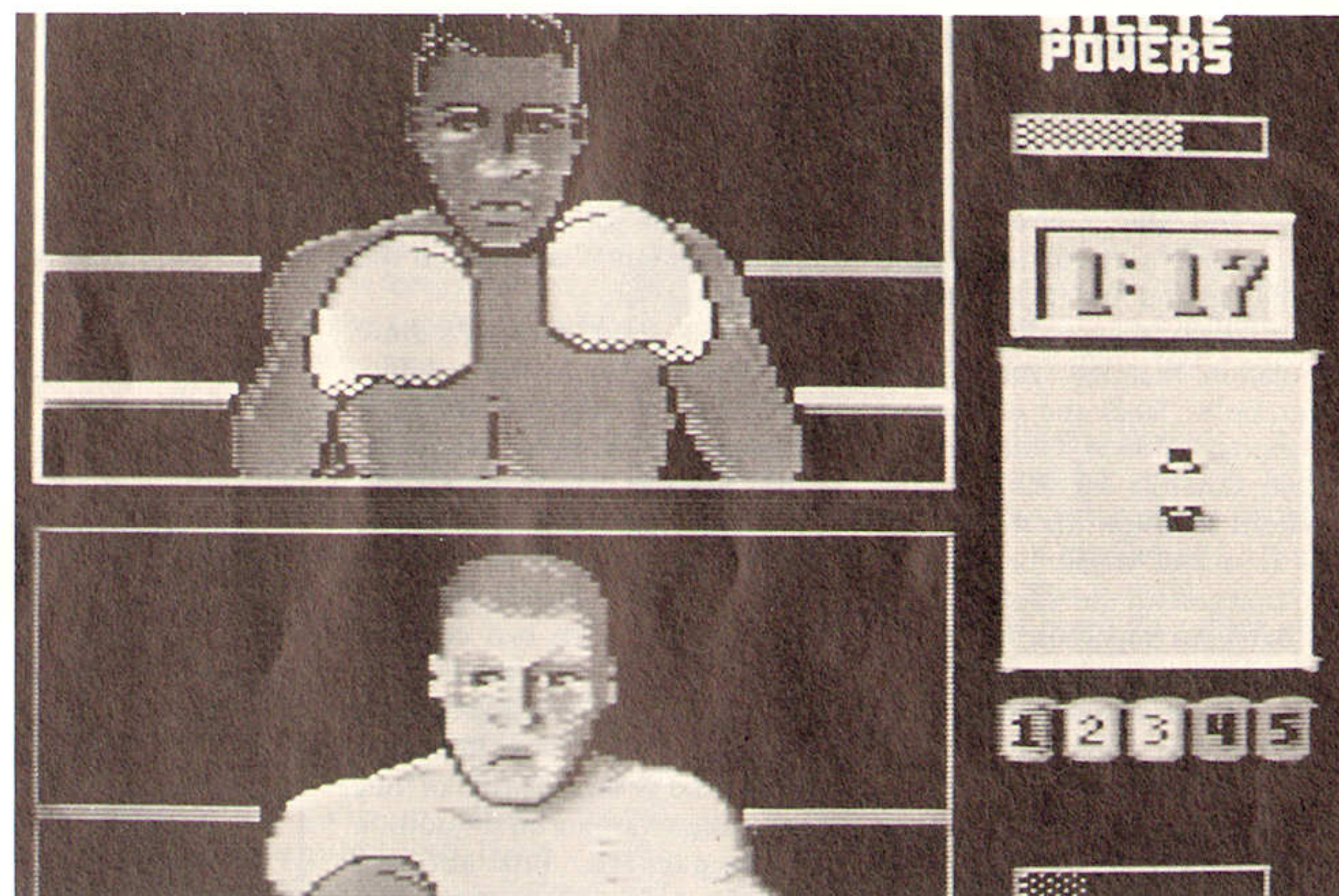
TKO is a fairly basic boxing game for the Commodore 64/128 which features an interesting split screen view. Though the action in this game is amusing, it will probably appeal best to younger players, and it has been kept relatively simple from the control standpoint—however, that is not to say it is without challenges.

The goal, as it usually is in boxing, is to become the champion. In one-player games, you must fight four challengers, and, having beaten them, you fight the Champ. You can pick from among four up and coming fighters, determine their characteristics: power hand (right or left), power vs. speed, best punch (head or body), and weakness (cuts or fatigue). These characteristics are picked on a slider, for instance, more power on the right hand necessarily makes the left hand a little weaker, and so forth.

In the actual boxing mode of the game, you see a large image of each boxer in a separate window, one above the other. When you punch, you see your boxer's glove go out toward you and at the same time, in the other window, you see the glove attempt to make contact with your opponent. This unique viewpoint allows you to see the action differently from any other boxing game, most of which show you either a distance shot (as if you were seeing the action on a TV), or a first person view (as if from the eyes of your own boxer).

In addition to the two large images, you can see a smaller aerial view of the boxers in the ring. Though you don't actually move the boxers, an effective offense can drive the opponent into the ropes or the corner. If you do so, your punches become much more effective. As the bout continues, boxers will visibly cut or bruise, adding a level of realism that may appeal to some, though I found it did little for me either way.

All fighting is done with the joystick, and the punch thrown is determined by the joystick position and by the current defensive posture which you can set at any time during the game by moving the joystick up or down. For instance, to throw lots of jabs, keep a high defense; to throw hooks, keep your hands in the middle; for uppercuts, block the body.



Though I enjoyed playing the game, I found it fairly easy to defeat the computer opponents. Often, you could find a weakness and exploit it consistently. For instance, I found several opponents susceptible to a left hook, and knocked them silly again and again until they went down for the last time. Also, I found that with some stiffer joysticks, I had trouble holding the stick to the correct place and pressing the button over and over for a furious attack. However, part of the skill of the game is to use good timing and effective punch selection—not wasting the boxer's limited supply of energy.

This game doesn't really include as much detail as some simulations, though it includes more than the purely arcade types of games. It is a sort of middle-range simulation—fun, but not highly detailed and with limited control over your boxer's characteristics. However, fighter's records are updated after each contest, providing some continuity to the game. Also, it can be fun to start your own competition with friends. In a two-player game, the action is less predictable, and the challenge is greater.

TKO is graphically different from any boxing simulation I've tried; however it is fundamentally the same as all of them. The idea is to

outpunch your opponent and knock him out or out point him for a decision. For its target audience, TKO is a pretty enjoyable game, though I think there are other boxing games out there that may appeal more to older players.

Name: TKO
Type: Sports Simulation
Formats: C64/128
Publisher: Accolade
Designer: Mike Lorenzen
Ages: 7 to 16
*** Players:** 1 or 2
Price: \$29.95

Ability Level: Beginner
Packaging: Very Good (8.5)
Documentation: Very Good (8.5)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (8.5)
Realism: Fair (7.5)
Playability: Very Good (8.5)

CP RATING: 8.38
Circle Reader Service Number 12.

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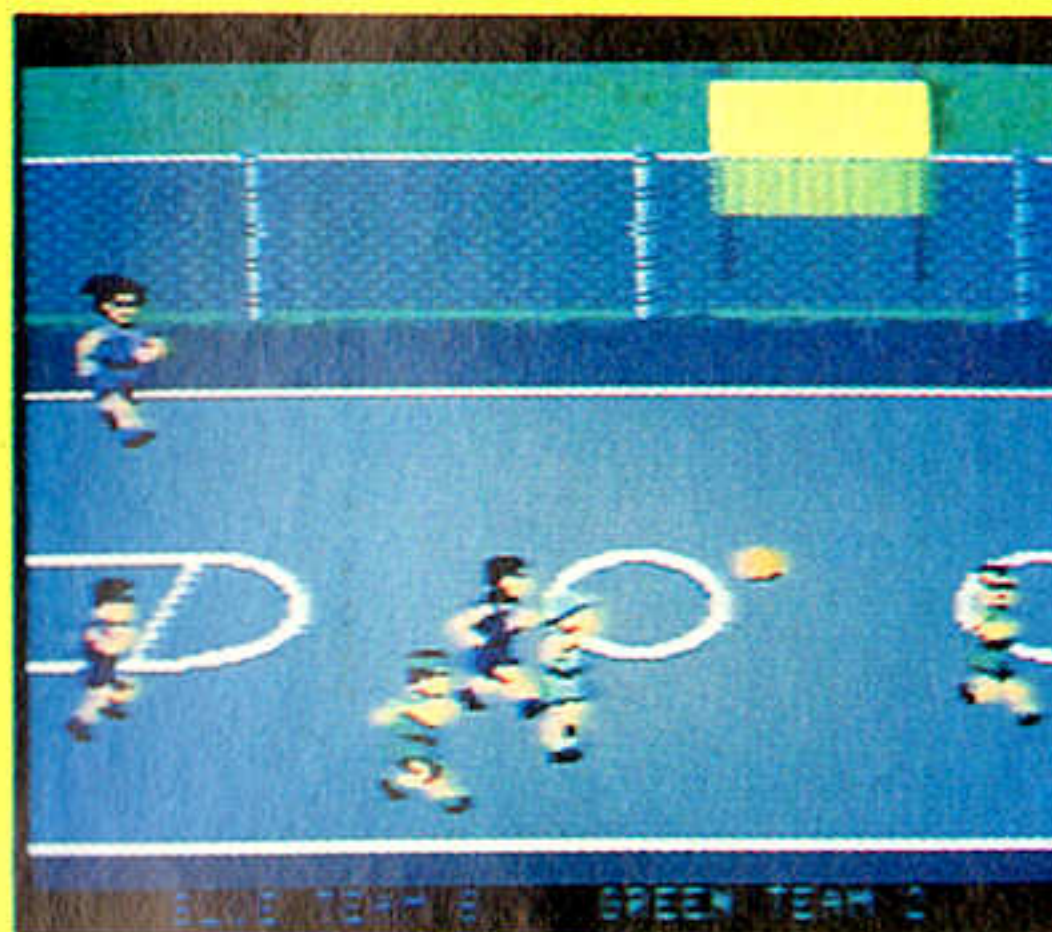
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◀ 30

study just to figure out the diagram. I just experimented with the joystick to see what effects I could get. Someone who actually competes in these events might find the complexity of the simulation interesting. I liked the animation in these events. In the Ropes events a dragon's mouth on the wall behind him shows how tired you're getting in one position, by slowly closing. The girl on the uneven parallel bars has a friend watching her. When time is running out for the routine, she looks at her watch. If you do poorly, she cries in sympathy.

In the hurdles, you must race along a 400 meter course and jump over ten hurdles. You crouch down and at the crack of a starter's gun, take off, racing to get the best time against all other competitors. If you stumble and fall, you're out of the race. This is not an easy event, but one that I enjoyed. Your view is from the side, where you see yourself and another runner (some slower computers may show only one runner). This event requires speed and timing. I haven't mastered it yet, but I'm having fun trying.

Velodrome sprint cycling is another racing event. In this event, however, you race in 'heats'. That means if you win the race you advance to the next heat. If you lose, you're out. The race is 1000 meters long. You have to

have endurance and strategy to win. You can save energy by 'drafting' on your opponent. You and your cycle get behind him and are dragged along in his airstream. When you are close to the finish, you put on a burst of speed and go for the gold. Your view in sprint cycling is from behind the two cyclists. You have a three-dimensional view of the stadium. A bird's-eye view of the race is shown on the side of the screen. This is a good event, though in practice, all I had to do to win was bump my opponent off the track (this backfired sometimes, when I was bumped off, instead).

The last event is the pole vault. This is another of my favorite events. You race down the ramp and place your pole to lift you over the horizontal crossbar. You get three tries. When you succeed, you can set the crossbar higher. If you don't vault properly, you may break your pole. If you wait too long, you will run right past the uprights (embarrassing). When you vault over the crossbar your man jumps up in ecstasy and you see an instant replay in a box on the top of the screen (another of the touches I like in these Games).

In competition, when you finish all the events, the winning country is honored in an animated ceremony that shows the stadium with celebrants banging drums. Then you can go back and start the games over again (no waiting another four years).

The Games: Summer Edition is another winner in Epyx's long line of Olympic games. The variety of events holds something for many computer sports fans, from simple games to complex, from serious competition to comic fun. If you liked Summer Games, Winter Games and the others, then go get The Games: Summer Edition. It matches and even surpasses the standard for playability and fun set by these earlier games.

Name: THE GAMES: SUMMER EDITION

Type: Arcade/Sports Simulation

Formats: Apple II, IBM C64/128

Publisher: Epyx

Ages: 10 and above

Requirements: IBM 512K, two drive or a hard drive recommended

Players: One to Eight

Price: \$34.95, \$44.95

Ability Level: Beginner

Packaging: Very Good (9)

Documentation: Excellent (9.5)

Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.8)

Realism: Very Good (9)

Playability: Very Good (8.5)

CP RATING: 8.93

Circle Reader Service Number 30.

Excitement in the 25th Century

By R. Bradley Andrews

In the 25th century, life has become dull and boring. Gone is the war and nearly every thrill has become a thing of the past. As in Rome, gladiatorial sports have once again arisen to provide entertainment to the masses. The thrilling space races provide that boost of excitement the world is looking for. From the dreags of society, you have been given a chance for glory.

With your second hand speeder, you must successfully navigate each of the three preliminary rounds to qualify for a place in the **Space Racer** finals. Each race occurs on a different planet, each with its own distinct scenery. The course is marked with a dashed line, which you must follow at top speed, to reach the finish line before your fuel runs out. While driving, you must avoid the many obstacles that have been placed on either side of the race course. At the least, hitting these will throw you for a loop, causing you to lose control and valuable time. At the worst, you will be in a nasty wreck and be delayed while a new speeder is prepared.

All this doesn't sound too hard, right? Well, all of the other planets top racers are competing as well. If you get in their way, they have no qualms about running your speeder off the course or even shooting it out from under you.



Fortunately, your speeder also has an energy gun which you can use to clear the way ahead of you. But this also uses precious energy, so it should be used sparingly. Mines are also randomly scattered about the course. These should be fown over, or better yet, an enemy can be used to explode them for you.

Should you successfully complete the three qualifying courses it is on to the final race in an attempt for fame and glory. Whatever your fate, if you should score high enough, your name and high score will be saved to tell the universe of your exploits.

The joystick provides a very fine control method, especially those with the fire button

on the handle, since it is used to accelerate. The keyboard can be used for control though, if needed. The game features crisp, clear three dimensional graphics which give a feeling of depth to the game. They meet up to the standards set by other Atari ST games. The sounds, while simple, meet the requirements and complement game play.

Space Racer is an effective implementation of the racing game theme and should be enjoyed by many racing game fans.

Name: SPACE RACER

Type: Arcade

Formats: IBM, Atari ST, Amiga

Publisher: Broderbund

Designer: Microids

Ages: 8 and above

Requirements: None

Players: One or Two

Price: \$29.95

Ability Level: Beginner-Advanced

Packaging: Good (7.5)

Documentation: Average (6.5)

Graphics/Text: Very Good (8.5)

Playability: Good (7.5)

CP RATING: 7.60

Circle Reader Service Number 33.

From Arcade to Computer



By Johns S. Manor

Ikari Warriors is a faithful translation to the home computer of the popular stand-up arcade game. I reviewed the IBM version of *Ikari Warriors* on a Tandy 1000TX. It is as challenging as the arcade version and provides just as much fun.

Ikari Warriors can be played by two players using joysticks or by one player using a joystick or keyboard commands. (I don't know why the game's designers didn't allow for a two-player mode, using the keyboard.) The Apple version is for one player only. The game also allows you to quit, pause and turn the music on or off.

Your goal in *Ikari Warriors* is to advance up the vertically scrolling screen and blast every enemy soldier or installation in sight. Your weapons at the start are a machine gun and hand grenades. You can pick up ammunition and better weapons as you progress through the game. My favorite weapon is the tank. You enter a tank by standing on it and hitting fire button two. The protective armor of the tank is almost as necessary to get very far in this game. It lets you roll over enemy soldiers, untouched by their bullets. If a cannon or hand grenade blast disables your tank, you will have to leave it. You will find tanks at various points in the game.

Walking or driving over various icons on the screen gives you bonus items. The bonuses include: super bullets or grenades, longer range bullets, speed up firing, kill all enemies on the screen, add 40 grenades or bullets to your supply and an energy supply for tanks, bullets and grenades. You get more points for destroying enemy tanks, helicopters and gates, and another 5000 points for advancing a level.

Ikari Warriors on the Tandy was as hard to beat as the arcade original. My five lives seemed to flash by in front of my eyes. The tank helped, allowing me to get to the first fortress gate. But be advised, you will have to play this game many hours before advancing beyond one or two levels.

I liked the graphics and the variety of situations in *Ikari Warrior*. You come up against bunkers, a high-walled fortress with guards on top, rivers with narrow bridges to cross (or you can wade across, slowing your man down) and more. When you play a level, all the soldiers, bunkers and other items are always in the same places, making it possible for you to learn some kind of strategy or pattern for advancing up the screen.

Ikari Warriors comes with a brief instruction manual for the IBM and Apple versions. The program supports either CGA or EGA graphics. It appeared to use the Tandy's 16 color mode

when I played it.

Ikari Warriors is a solid arcade game, even though I was somewhat disappointed it didn't save high scores. It is difficult to beat and will challenge even the toughest computer gamer. Rambo fans will want to boot this one up, jump in a tank and start blasting away.

Name: IKARI WARRIOR
Type: Arcade
Formats: IBM, C64/128, Apple II
Publisher: Data East
Ages: 10 and up
Requirements: IBM 256K, 512K Tandy 1000, CGA, EGA or Hercules
Monochrome graphics.
Joystick recommended.
*** Players:** One or Two
Price: IBM \$39.95, C-64/128 \$29.95, Apple II \$34.95

Ability Level: Beginner to Advanced
Packaging: Good (8)
Documentation: Good (7.5)
Graphics: Good (8)
Realism: Good (8)
Playability: Good (7.5)

CP RATINGS: 7.63
 Circle Reader Service Number 25.

◀ 23

Name: CONTRA
Type: Arcade Action
Formats: C64/128, IBM, Amiga
Publisher: Konami
Ages: 10 and above
Requirements: None
*** Players:** One or Two
Price: \$29.95, \$39.95

Ability Level: Beginner-Advanced
Packaging: Very Good (7.5)
Documentation: Poor (4)
Graphics/Text: Average (6.5)
Realism: Very Good (7.5)
Playability: Very Good (7.5)

CP RATING: 6.85
 Circle Reader Service Number 31.



Next on the list is *Rush'n Attack*. You have once again been air dropped in, but this time it is at the perimeter of a highly guarded enemy camp where several important POWs are being held. Even though the enemy has a human face this time, he is just as mean and you will have your hands full penetrating all the way to

where the prisoners are held. Several different stages must be traversed in your quest to reach the POWs.

Many types of enemy soldiers will attempt to stop you from your mission. The most common, the foot soldiers, are fairly easy to dispatch and simply provide a nuisance. Others, such as machine gunners, mortar firers and attack dogs can give you an Excedrin Headache #301.

These enemies would seem insurmountable if all you had available was the knife you began the game with. Fortunately, you can steal the weapons right out of the enemy's own hands, turning bazookas, hand grenades and pistols against them and wiping out scores with one shot. Sometimes an invincibility shield may even become available, allowing you to literally mow through the opposition.

Each game segment consists of working your way through a horizontally scrolling section,

Instead, 40 two-man elite jeep crews have been brought together to penetrate each camp, one or two at a time. Special stealth helicopters land at various way points to fly any rescued POWs to safety.

Your jeep is armed with both a grenade launcher and a machine gun. While the machine gun has the greatest firing speed of the two, it only fires straight up and is relatively short ranged, limiting its utility. The grenade launcher can be upgraded by picking up certain POWs and running over certain symbols, turning it into a rocket launcher and increasing its explosive power.

Enemy forces come by land, sea and air. Foot soldiers can carry either a rifle or special anti-jeep launcher. Tanks, trucks and fixed guns all litter the landscape; gunboats and submarines patrol the coast; and something akin to an A-10 bomber periodically tries to drop death from above. But with careful maneuvering, you can out-drive these enemies and reach your goal.

The game features an overhead view during play. After each of the legs of your journey, you will come face to face with some particularly nasty group of foes, as they attempt to terminate your mission. Only limited back-tracking is permitted during play; the only way to safety is forward.

If you are looking for some good action games for your PC, be sure to check these out.

Name: RUSH'N ATTACK
Type: Arcade Action
Formats: C64/128, IBM, Amiga
Publisher: Konami
Ages: 10 and above
Requirements: None
*** Players:** One or Two
Price: \$29.95, \$39.95

Ability Level: Beginner-Advanced
Packaging: Very Good (7.5)
Documentation: Poor (4)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (7.5)
Realism: Very Good (7.5)
Playability: Very Good (7.5)

CP RATING: 6.98
 Circle Reader Service Number 31.

Name: JAKAL
Type: Arcade Action
Formats: C64/128, IBM, Amiga
Publisher: Konami
Ages: 10 and above
Requirements: None
*** Players:** One or Two
Price: \$29.95, \$39.95

Ability Level: Beginner-Advanced
Packaging: Very Good (7.5)
Documentation: Poor (4)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (7.5)
Realism: Very Good (7.5)
Playability: Very Good (7.5)

CP RATING: 6.98
 Circle Reader Service Number 31.



The Little Castle of Horrors

By John S. Manor

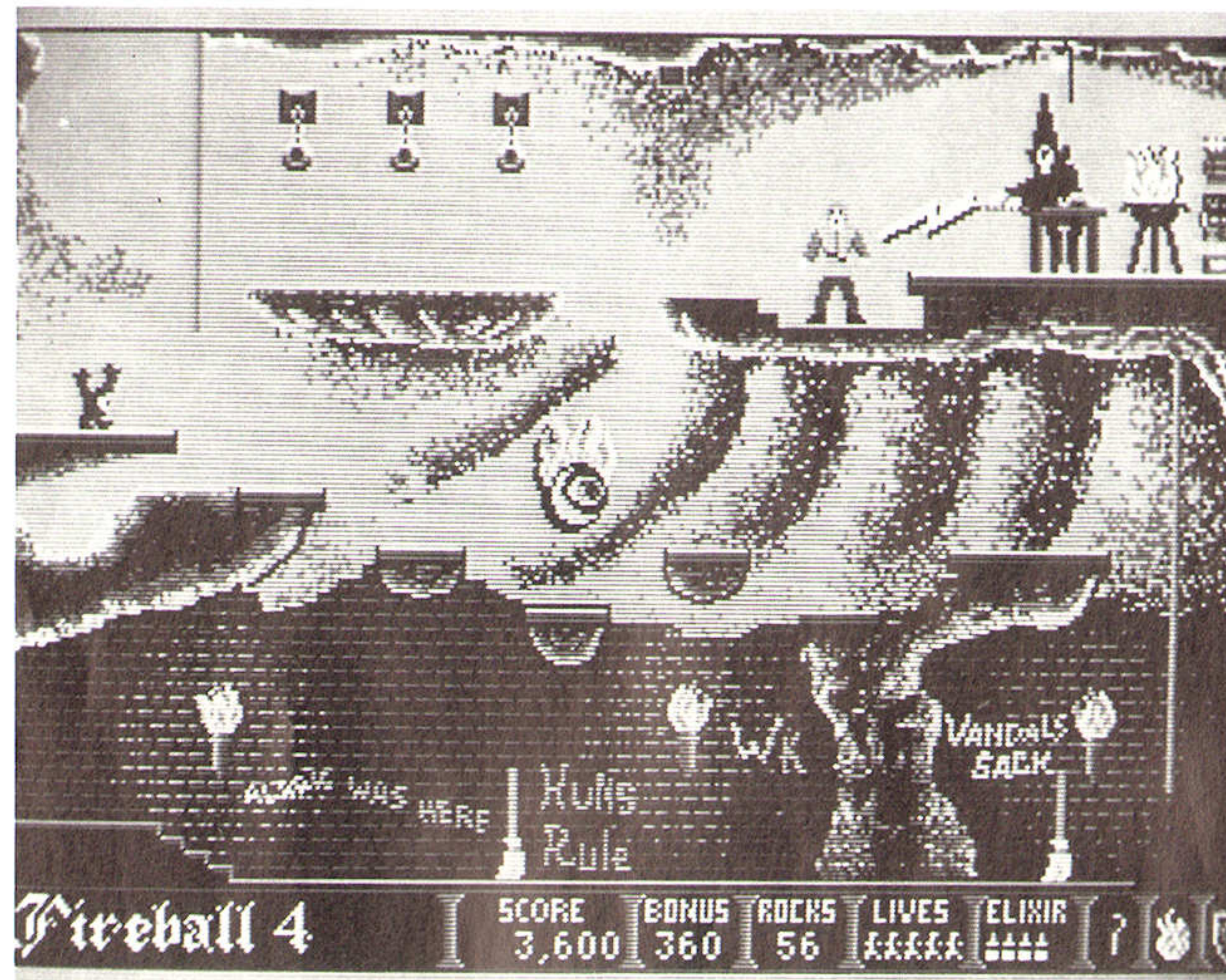
Dark Castle is a challenging arcade game from Three-Sixty Pacific that boasts nice graphics and campy, humorous animation in the Tandy 1000 version. You walk through a creepy castle filled with plague-ridden rats and bats. Your goal is to topple the Black Knight from his throne. Along the way, guards, mutants and even a burning eye will try to stop you from fulfilling your quest. With courage, skill and a big bag of rocks, you will make it through.

After you boot **Dark Castle** you see an animated screenshot of the castle as lightning flashes around it. Hitting the space bar takes you to the Screen of Merit, where high scores are shown. This screen also allows you to choose the beginner, intermediate or advanced levels. You can play the game, quit the game, see a demo, get help and select options by moving an arrow over a menu with the joystick or keys. The 'Demo' mode is interesting to watch and will show you how you can beat some of the screens. The 'Help' selection replaces the manual (you only get an instruction card with the game) and gives all the information you need to play the game as well as some background on the Black Knight and how to defeat him. Hitting 'Options' lets you clear high scores, and turn the sound on or off.

Choosing 'Play' from the Screen of Merit sends you to a foyer in the castle where you see four doors. Hitting keys 1 through 4 will open a door and send you on your way. The castle is divided into four areas; Trouble, Fireball, Shield and Black Knight. The several screens in each area remind me of older games like **Jump Man** and **Donkey Kong**, though with better animation. You have to jump over some obstacles and climb a series of ropes to get around the castle. You need four things in order to defeat the Black Knight; a shield, elixirs, bags of rocks and the fireball power that turns your rocks into fireballs. Getting them won't be easy, as each screen is quite challenging.

You play **Dark Castle** with a joystick and keyboard or just the keyboard. This is one game where I found the keyboard to be easier and more accurate to use than the joystick. You have to use the keyboard for jumping, ducking and handling objects in the castle. You aim your man's arm and let rocks fly at birds, rats or anything else that gets in your way. A word of warning, though: you can only stun the guards. They will get back up and boy, will they be mad!

You score points in **Dark Castle** by hitting rats, bats, mutants and other castle denizens with the rocks you carry. You get extra points



for finishing a screen quickly, for getting the shield or fireball power and for toppling the throne. Extra men are given when you score a set number of points for each play level.

Dark Castle is one of those games that you can spend hours with just mastering a few screens and discovering new ones. The first screen of the 'Trouble' area is tough. You're outside the castle with a flock of birds diving at you. You hit them with rocks and walk toward the castle, but mutants guard it, so you have to get rid of them and then climb ropes up to the entrance. Meanwhile, more birds are coming and you have to try to pick up bags of rocks or bottles of elixir while you're fighting them off. (The elixir is a cure for the deadly plague the rats and bats carry. They can kill you with one bite.) Another screen puts you in a dungeon, with a whip henchman working out on some prisoners. You must get by the rats, bats and guards, grab a mace, zap the henchman with it and get a key to the main hall. If you forget to jump over the henchman (he's a big fellow), you will trip and wander about dazed for a few seconds (often just long enough for a rat to bite you). A couple of screens I have encountered have trap doors that send you back down to the dungeon. You have to be wide awake and have quick reflexes when playing this game.

The animation in **Dark Castle** adds a lot to the fun of the game. Not only can you trip over things in the castle, but if you walk off a ledge

or cliff, you see your character do an imitation of Wile E. Coyote, from the Roadrunner cartoons. He looks down, looks up at you and then falls to the ground. Touches like this put a game one more notch above the competition.

Dark Castle is a high-quality arcade game that will please you with its challenging screens, humorous animation and creepy horror-movie atmosphere. It's one game you will find yourself booting up again and again.

Name: DARK CASTLE
Type: Arcade
Formats: IBM, Atari ST, C64
Amiga, Apple IIGS
Publisher: Silicon Beach Software
Distributor: Three-Sixty Pacific, Inc.
Ages: 10 and above
Requirements: None
*** Players: One**
Price: \$34.95, \$44.95

Ability Level: Beginner-Advanced
Packaging: Good (7.5)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (9)
Realism: Good (8)
Playability: Very Good (9)

CP RATING: 8.58
Circle Reader Service Number 29.

BACK ISSUES OF COMPUTER PLAY IN THE NEWS!!!

Computer Times

HEADLINES:

Man suffers severe shock at learning his past issues of **Computer Play Magazine** were accidentally destroyed in play by paper eating dog. He is now recovering in local addiction center...doing well, however sources say he has underground connections with blackmarket dealers of past issues. Investigators are determining if the past issues have been smuggled into the addiction center. Will keep our readers updated.

CP Gossip News

HEADLINES:

Scandal rocks City Hall: Sources discovered the mayor using munipicle funds to obtain back issues of **Computer Play Magazine**, revealing a coverup by several other members of local government, all of whom were photographed by undercover reporters sharing issues in a locked lunchroom after business hours.

REBUTTAL AND COMMENT BY EDITOR OF COMPUTER PLAY (Well, actually, it was the Editors, secretary's next in line, part time copy girl, Muffy Cashmire, a talented copier, and paper replenisher.)

People have to realize, this is the 1989's. Usage of our game review magazine is becoming an accepted part of the electronically oriented society. We hope to see copies of **Computer Play Magazine** in every home, and to show how to accomplish this we have made them available to the buying public, so save them up folks...who knows how long you will be able to obtain them!!

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August:

Project Stealth Fighter \ Bard's Tale III \ Police Quest \ Nobunga's Ambition

September:

Decisive Battles of Civil War \ The Games: Winter Edition \ Legend of Zelda \ Contra Dungeonmaster

October:

Leader Board Golf \ Pete Rose's Pennant Fever \ Chuck Yeager's Flight Simulator PHM Pegasus \ Jam Session

November:

Microsoft 3.0 Flight Simulator \ Empire \ Double Dragon \ Rommel: The Desert Fox Superstar Ice Hockey

December:

NBA: Jordan Vs. Bird \ Acradia \ Shufflepuck Cafe \ Leatherneck

January:

Battle Chess \ 4X4 Offroad \ Battlehawks 1942 \ Red Storm Rising \ Final Assault

February:

Caveman \ Space Cutter \ Alien Virus \ Stock Market Traders \ Kosmic Kreig

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The Great Escape



By D. Nathan Richardson

In *Phantasm*, you are a prisoner on an asteroid prison in an asteroid belt. You have been imprisoned because of your activities as a rebel, not to mention your capture, and the authorities are quite angry with you. After all, you just can't expect to go around putting photon bombs all over the place and not have the evil establishments raise an eyebrow.

Well, here you are, just escaped from your cell and at the controls of a craft that is specifically designed to operate on the surface of an asteroid, not for interplanetary travel. You can only make it to the rebel base on the planet surface nearby if you get an interplanetary ship. But asteroids don't have them, so you must go from asteroid to asteroid by using the relay station that every asteroid station has. You have to be careful, though, when you're shooting it out with the planetary defenses, since there's only one relay station per asteroid and if you knock it out by mistake, it's back to the silicon mines for you.

You have stolen the most advanced fighter craft available to make your escape good. Your fighter is equipped with lasers when you get it. It also has the capacity to fire missiles, but those you have to buy from the mercenaries that run the supply dumps. You also have anti-missile capability that is built into the craft so you don't have to worry about your defense. Also on the defense side of your craft's ability is your warning system. The warning system tells you if there are missiles coming in so you can activate

your anti-missile system. Another warning system is the cloak warning, telling you that enemies nearby are using cloaking devices so you can't see them. You, of course, have your own cloaking device, so you too can be invisible, but that takes a lot of power from your shields, and believe me captain you need every ounce of power you can spare.

The other controls you have are your greater and less than signs: greater than, gives you more altitude, while less than, can bring you all the way to earth (ugh, asteroid). The joystick controls your movement and speed: push forward for more speed, pull back to slow down, left and right are left and right (unless your joystick is upside down).

Your speed indicators will keep you informed of your speed, your cloak will tell you your cloak is on (K on the keyboard to activate, L to deactivate), and you're on your way to the outer perimeter of the asteroid belt to make your escape good to the rebel base: But not so fast.

First you have to get by the million or so craft, buildings and other military obstacles that are going to make you wish you had chosen a career as a garbage scow captain. First is the fortress: fastfires torpedoes and lasers, and you can't take it out with lasers, only missiles. There's more than one type of fortress, and the other types might be vulnerable to laser attack, but they have more weapon systems, and can kill you just as fast if not faster. Then there's the done: equal in strength to the strongest of

fortresses, it also can only be taken out by missiles.

Then the ground movers; they are scattered all over the place and move on the surface, just to keep you busy. There are a variety of these, and they can have different weapon systems, all deadly. Ah, now the hunters. These fly, and chase you firing all kinds of weapons at you as you try to make your escape good. Like the buildings, and ground movers, these also come in different shapes, sizes, colors and weapons.

It's not gonna be easy, but if you keep your eyes on the long and short range scanners, and your finger on the trigger, you just might get out in time to join the real action on the rebel planet.

Name: PHANTASM
Type: Arcade
Formats: IBM, Amiga, Atari ST
Publisher: CRL Group
Ages: 8 and above
Requirements: CGA Card
Players: One
Price: \$34.95, \$39.95

Difficulty: Beginner
Packaging: Good (7)
Documentation: Fair (6)
Graphics/Text: Fair (5)
Playability: Fair (5)

CP RATING: 5.35
Circle Reader Service Number 21.

Other Ports

By Rusel DeMaria

I've always liked products that let me be creative. I was a fan of such past offerings as Broderbund's *Arcade Machine* and *Silicone Beach's World Builder* - Both systems were designed to make it easy to create your own games.

I've also been a big fan of animation - starting, of course, with the animated cartoons of the 1920's and those that followed. I always thought computers would be the key that would let anyone, even me, create animated productions.

There have been programs that allowed animation on computers, but, in some ways, they have been limited or based on a model that didn't take into account many of the aspects of a finished production. However, today, companies are beginning to introduce software that makes it possible to create animated stories and presentations at almost any level. Two fairly recent introductions are *Cartooners* from Electronic Arts and *Art and Film Director* from Epyx.

Cartooners for the Apple IIGS is designed with the novice in mind, particularly children ages 6-12. The artwork for the product is supplied with it, so it is primarily a program for combining existing backgrounds, characters, and sound effects into relatively simple stories. You can combine several of the characters, make them appear and disappear at will, and even make them talk via a variety of thought and speech bubbles that you also control.

Different characters have specific abilities. Some may be able to hop, jump, wave, or fly - there is even a cartoon dog who can moonwalk a la Michael Jackson. You choose the movement and orientation of each character by selecting it with the mouse, then making a selection from a character walking across the screen and start recording the action, the program takes care of producing a sequence of frames. You can then return to any frame and add or change the action. For instance, you might add another character at any point, or even change the background. Even though *Cartooners* is a limited program, it leaves plenty of room for creativity. Using the built-in effects and music, you can create some amusing stories and some enjoyable moments. Upcoming are disks with specialized scenery and characters. One of the first will be a set of homework aids like maps and weather symbols, allowing students to use *Cartooners* for creating animated presentations for class.

Considering its target audience and intended uses, *Cartooners* is a very enjoyable product. The characters and backgrounds are professionally done, so anyone, regardless of artistic ability, can have fun.

Art and Film Director is currently available for the Atari ST and the IIGS, though a DOS version is coming. This is a very different product



than *Cartooners* and its ability is limited primarily by the limits of the person using the product. Though the sample animation that accompanies the product is relatively crude, it does demonstrate some of the effects available with this product, but a sample video prepared using *Art and Film Director* really shows off the capabilities of the program. This video tape, which may be distributed to some computer dealers around the country as a demo, shows an animation that runs about 7 or 8 minutes. The star of the show is one Mega Mouse. His adventures while demonstrating how *Art and Film Director* works are amusing and very professional. This mouse is as detailed and smoothly animated as anything from Disney. I was astounded that it could be done with a home computer program. Needless to say, the person who put together the animation was a very talented and professional artist, but the quality of the result is testimony to the power of the program.

Art and Film Director does its best to follow the traditions of cell animation, and, on the ST and the IIGS, is divided into two sections. In the *Art Director* program, you create your actors and backgrounds, including all the different views and pieces that may be used to animate a character. Here, artistic ability really helps; the characters will only be as good as you can draw them.

Art Director is a pretty good paint program

with many of the expected tools and a few that aren't so standard like bend, bulge, perspective, smear, melt, and shade. There are lots of ways to blend and control colors, and other ways to shape and reshape objects. In general, the *Art Director* portion of this product is a pretty decent paint program that could probably stand alone, without the animation part. And if you already have artwork in *NEOchrome* or *Degas Elite Delux Paint*, *Paintworks Plus*, or *Paintworks Gold* formats, a special conversion program is available so you can import it into *Art Director*.

Despite its strength as a paint program, Epyx decided to keep the art and animation programs together and sell them as one package. In fact, in the upcoming DOS version, the two will be even more closely intergrated.

The *Film Directory* program is a very complex and sophisticated tool for controlling animation. It uses actors and stages and various levels of action, which allows some objects to pass in front or in back of others. In fact, *Film Director* divides the pieces of animation into several categories - objects, groups, cells, frames, phases, and actors. An actor is really a complete action - a bouncing ball, for instance, or a running man. But the man may be comprised of many parts. A single still image of an animated actor is a phase. A cell is one layer containing groups of objects that are treated as a whole, and a frame is a single image containing

all the cells layered onto each other.

As complex as all this sounds, Film Director can automate much of the job. For instance, to cause a man to walk across a scene, it may only be necessary to place the man at his starting position, then indicate his final destination. The computer will create the necessary animation, using the different phases of the actor, to complete the job.

There are several complex functions including interpolation and tweening, which help you create more sophisticated and interesting effects. Also you have complete control of every frame of the animation, even allowing

you to make changes to an actor anywhere he appears in the production. In fact, there's much more to this program, and if it sounds like something you really want, I highly recommend it, with the following warning:

There's virtually no limit to what you can do with Art and Film Director, given sufficient talent and time. However, these are pretty complicated programs and you shouldn't think that the work is going to be automatic. Crafting a professional quality animation with this program is very possible, but requires many hours of effort and careful attention to detail. The tools are there, but you need to learn to

use them. This program could be used to produce the video portion of a very convincing cartoon very close to professional quality, or to produce dramatic animated presentations in business.

By the way, I mentioned **World Builder** at the beginning of this column. The developer of World Builder was Bill Appleton, and Bill has struck again with the new, and very hot, **HyperCard** enhancement from Silicon Beach -SuperCard. I hope to slip in among the games some additional information about this great creativity product in future columns, but that's it for now.

Channel Three Switching On

By **Rusel DeMaria**

Fans of the CBS TV series *Wise Guy* must have been surprised to see Terranova's boss playing Super Mario Bros 2 late at night. Surprisingly, when I talked to one of my contacts at Nintendo, she didn't even know about it. If you missed it, you might be able to catch it in reruns, though I suppose you would have to be pretty dedicated to want to watch a show just to see one of the characters playing a video game. Whatever, I thought it pretty funny, myself. Mario goes Hollywood and starts work for the OCB. Is this really what our nation's top security operatives do with their free time?

Anyway, back to Cartridge land. Last month I talked about Winter CES and all the new titles and other gadgets that were announced. This month, I thought I'd follow up on that. Here is the 1989 third party licensee's title list that Nintendo sent out: **Acclaim Entertainment, Inc.**, Aifwolf, Wizards and Warriors II, Knight Rider; **Activision**, Predator, Three Stooges, MIG Hunter; **American Sammy**, Amagon, Ninja Taro; **Bandi America, Inc.**, Bandi Golf (Pebble Beach), Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Mask Rider, Shooting Gallery, Street Cop; **Broderbund Software, Inc.**, Legacy of the Wizard, The Guardian Legend, Battle of Olympus; **Capcom USA, Inc.**, Mega Man II, Strider, Willow, California Raisins, Duck Tales, Adventures in Disneyland, Sweet Home; **Culture Brain, USA**, Kung-Fu Heroes, Flying Dragon, The Magic of Shahrazad, Flying Dragon II; **Data East, Inc.**, RoboCop, Bad Dudes; **FCI**, Ultima, Hydlide; **Gametek**, Wheel of Fortune (Junior Edition), Jeopardy (Junior Edition), Hollywood Squares, Double Dare; **Hal America, Inc.**, Adventures of Lolo, Air Fortress, Roller Ball; **Hi-Tech**

Expressions, Sesame Street ABC, Chessmaster; **Hot-B USA**, Black Bass II; **Hudson Soft USA, Inc.**, Star Ship Hector, Adventure of Dino-Riki; **Jaleco**, Hoops, Goal!; **KOEI Corporation**, Nobunaga's Ambition; **Konami, Inc.**, Track & Field II, Bayou Billy; **LJN Toys, Ltd.**, Nightmare on Elm Street, Who Framed Roger Rabbit, Marvel Comics' X-Men, NFL Football; **Milton Bradley**, California Games, World Games, Marble Madness, Jordan vs. Bird One on One; **Mindscape, Inc.**, 720, Infiltrator, Road Runner; **Romstar, Inc.**, Air Hawk; **SNK Corporation of America**, Guerilla War, Baseball Stars, P.O.W.; **Seika Corporation**, Spy vs. Spy/The Island Caper, Desert Commander; **Seta USA, Inc.**, Adventures of Tom Sawyer; **Sunsoft**, Fester's Quest, Terminator; **Taito Software, Inc.**, Operation Wolf, Sky Shark; **Taxan USA Corporation**, Mappy Land, Fist of the Northern Star, Mystery Quest; **Temco, Inc.**, Temco Baseball, Temco Bowl, Ninja Gaiden, Professional Wrestling, Silkworm; **Tradewest, Inc.**, Taboo, Magic Johnson's Fast Break, John Elway's Quarterback; **Ultra Software Corporation**, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Defender of the Crown, Q*Bert, Gyrus; **Vic Tokai, Inc.**, Terra Cresta, Kid Kool, Clash at Demon Head.

In addition to the titles listed above, American Technos, Irem Corp., Matchbox Toys, Mattel, Inc., and Sofel Ltd. are all expected to announce titles.

Well, in further Nintendo news, Dance Aerobics should be out by now, finally, I saw some very willing models putting the game through its paces at CES, and it seemed to require some pretty fancy footwork.

Also, Nintendo is signing up retailers for their World of Nintendo marketing and licensing program. This means that, in addition

to games, you can now purchase Nintendo beach towels, sweatshirts, t-shirts, pajamas, sleeping bags, lunch boxes and so on, ad infinitum. What more needs to be said about that?

Konami has pushed back the release of its new hand held games. Expect them in late June or Early July. Look for Bayou Billy and Ninja Turtles to ship by early June.

Taito expects to have Operation Wolf and Sky Shark shipping by now. Operation Wolf will work with either the Zapper or the hand controller. There's little doubt that Operation Wolf will be much sought after, especially considering its great success as a coin-op. (By the way, for you Sega fans, Rambo III from Sega will be, essentially, Operation Wolf.)

I've mentioned Capcom's Mega Man II, the story of Mega Man's confrontation with the evil Dr. Wily and his minions. It should be out around now, or soon, anyway. Another title coming from Capcom is Strider, and anti-glastnost game if I've ever seen one. In Strider, you play an agent dropped into the heart of the Soviet Union. Your enemies are the KGB and the Red Army. Strangely enough, your primary weapon is a whirling sword, while you're touring the Russian countryside, you'll have to try to stay alive. I wonder how long a real agent would last wielding a sword in Russia? Anyway, it sounds amusing.

American Sammy will release Amagon this month. Lost on a deserted island you play a marine who must traverse the island while defeating a host of creatures (some real, some fictional). Somewhere on the island, you can find a magic potion that makes you invincible for a while, though how long depends on your previous performance in the game. Also from

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Circle Reader Service Number 42.

"LIFE, OR DEATH ON MARS"



By Peter M. Sheppard

If you've ever wondered whether there really is alien life on Mars this game will answer that question. Yes, there is, but you wouldn't want to keep them as housepets! *Mars Saga*, the new fantasy role-playing game from ElectronicArts, has everything you're looking for in an adventure game, and even a little more. You represent the leader of a group of soldiers commissioned by the owners of the mining outposts on Mars. Your job is to figure out what has happened to the inhabitants of Proscenium, the furthest of the four mining cities, which has lost contact with the rest of the planet. Wending your way through each underground hamlet and across the planet surface, you pick up your crew, money, weapons, and

any pertinent information necessary to complete this task. But it will not be easy. Along the way you will encounter many difficult obstacles and challenges which test your intelligence and stamina.

FIRST, A LITTLE HISTORY—

During the mid twenty-first century a scientific expedition was sent to Mars to conduct mineral deposit tests. They found a high concentration of ilmenite, what titanium is extracted from, located in a triangle of mountain ranges on the planet surface. What they also found, to their surprise, was life on Mars. Several different species of carnivores on the dry, wind blown planet, who viewed earthmen as tasty morsels! Though there was a gamble involved in setting up an outpost on the planet the company, Paramount Mining, decided to

go for broke. As mining production increased more men were needed to run the operation and still bring in a profit. The problem was solved by the U.S. government who proposed the idea that the planet be turned into a penal colony. Soon, underground cities were built to house the inmates, security officers and merchants on Mars.

YOU'RE GOING TO NEED A FEW GOOD MEN, OR WOMEN

You start the game in Primus, the first Martian city, and run into an old friend who gives you a hint on where to go for your first assignment. Next, hit up a bar for your new team member. They are selected from either a military, or educational background with much of the same attributes as your team leader. Be careful to pick as well-rounded an individual as

you can, concentrating on specific traits later in the game. You become a stronger character through combat and completion of missions. The more experience you gain, the more people will want to join your group, and the more items you are able to use. You might want to check out the munitions store and get a bigger weapon than you start with. Remember to spend wisely! Traveling to another city requires a vac-suit and the price will vary for each team member. Also, if you're feeling lucky you can enter a gambling casino for a quick game of keno, or slots. Characters with good gambling skills will do well here, but don't waste too much money or time. You will want to remain in the Primus until your group is large and strong enough to travel to the next outpost.

There are three other cities, each one slightly different than the rest. You start in Primus, where you will gather your team, equipment, and information before venturing on to other cities. Primus has a moderate crime problem and you will encounter thugs and hoodlums in the streets, so watch out! Your next stop, Progeny, is a model Martian city. The security forces, and population, are very high so you may need to clear any dark spots on your past before wandering through this town, and check every repair shop for any local gossip. Parallax, the third city, has been labeled a 'haven for thugs and cutthroats' so arm your team to the teeth before entering here. Also there have been some reports of Nomads, humans who have been cast out of society to the planet surface, having gained entrance back into the city for supplies. Altogether, this town is a bad place to be in if you are down on your luck. The final outpost, Proscenium, was designed as the largest city on Mars. Though still in the development phase, there were at one time several human workers stationed here. Through some freak occurrence all contact with this city has been lost, leaving a nagging question to the owners of Paramount Mining. Whenever you are travelling from city to city remember to stay close to the elevators. Thirsty aliens are lurking everywhere!

DON'T BE A HERO, JUST COME HOME

The combat menu offers the most bang for the buck. You may choose between two types of combat control; computer or human, (known as tactical). For the most control over your characters choose tactical, which gives you several options for movement, choice of weapons, etc. But it is suggested that until you become well versed in fighting to let the computer fight for you while watching the combat. This will help you gain better understanding of how to fight. Most of the time you may choose to flee opponents without engaging them which is highly advised in the start of the game. When you're successful in combat a display of what you foe was carrying will be shown. Take every item, even if you can't use it yet, because you never know when they might

come in handy later when you've gained more experience. It is also a good idea to save the game, and map quite often. This will ensure your starting up again approximately the same location in case you are killed.

IN CONCLUSION

Mars Saga has a lot of thought put into it and I recommend it highly for those people interested in elaborate role-playing games. It is simple to get started in and will offer hours of adventure time to both the novice and hard core game players. With the options available it's almost like having three games in one, and the graphics are quite incredible - especially on the Martian surface. The documentation is helpful, while not giving too much of the game away. Which brings us to the only problem I've found.

Much of the game is a complete mystery and can prove to be very frustrating for the player. For instance, when I tried accessing the computer terminal the game was automatically dumped, and I had to re-boot and start over. I assume this was because my player wasn't adept enough at programming to break into the terminal. Also, be careful when making purchases at the start of the game. Your resources should be saved for vac-suits and

medical expenses, not fancy gadgets. Combat will take some practice before you can venture out into the big, bad world. You may consider buying the Mars Saga cluebook, \$12.95 plus tax and shipping, to answer these questions. Even so, I had a lot of fun just playing the game as is, and the more experienced gamer may not even need the extra help. Good luck, and happy hunting!

Name: MARS SAGA
Type: Adventure Role-Playing
Formats: C64
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Designer: Westwood Associates
Ages: 10 and above
Requirements: None
Players: One
Price: \$34.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Fair (6)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics: Good (8)
Playability: Good (7.2)

CP RATING: 7.40
Circle Reader Service Number 35.

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800-245-4525

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Redwood City, CA 94063
415-366-0606

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New York, NY 10022
212-753-8100

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619-453-5711

Final Frontier Software
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Tarzana, CA 91356
818-996-0431

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King of Prussia, PA 19406
215-337-1500

GameTek
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N. Miami Beach, FL 33180
305-935-3995

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212-941-1224

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Cambridge, MA 02140
617-492-6000

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Costa Mesa, CA 92626
714-545-7146

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Webster, TX 77598
713-486-4163

Intracorp
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Miami, FL 33186
305-252-9040

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408-848-4391

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St. Paul, MN 55101
612-292-1490

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Torrance, CA 90503
213-542-6444

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Wood Dale, IL 60191
312-595-1443

Logical Design Works
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San Jose, CA 95131
408-435-1445

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San Rafael, CA 94912
415-662-1800

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Northport, NY 11768
800-243-0345

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Tampa, FL 33614
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Costa Mesa, CA 92627
714-631-1001

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Hunt Valley, MD 21030
301-771-1151

MicroIllusions
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Granada Hills, CA 91344
800-522-2041

Microprose Software
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Hunt Valley, MD 21030
800-645-8632

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Northbrook, IL 60062
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203-658-6917

Origin Systems
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Londonderry, NH 03053
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Paragon Software
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Greensburgh, PA 15601
412-838-1166

PBI Software
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Foster City, CA 94404
415-349-8765

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Nanuet, NY 10954
914-623-2245

Polarware/Penguin
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Batavia, IL 60510
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San Diego, CA 92120
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Mountainview, CA 94043
415-322-0412

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22857 Lockness Ave.
Torrance, CA 90501
213-539-2744

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Wexford, PA 15090
412-935-5066

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Coarsegold, CA 93614
800-344-7448

Sir-Tech Software
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Ogdensburg, NY 13669
315-393-6633

Software Toolworks
13557 Ventura Blvd.
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423
818-907-6789

Spectrum HoloByte
2061 Challenger Dr.
Alameda, CA 94501
415-522-3584

Spinnaker
One Kerdall Square
Cambridge, MA 02139
800-826-0706

SSG
1747 Orleans Ct.
Walnut Creek, CA 94598
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Strategic Simulations
1046 N. Rengstroff Ave.
Mountain View, CA 94043
415-964-1353

SubLogic
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Champaign, IL 61820
800-637-4983

Sun Corp.
2250 Emhurst Rd.
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
312-228-1451

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North Vancouver, B.C.
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604-984-3344

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Milpitas, CA 95035
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Campbell, CA 95008
408-879-9144

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Chatsworth, CA 91311
818-709-3693

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San Francisco, CA 94109
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Vic Tokai Inc.
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Torrance, CA 90501
213-320-1199

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5421 Opportunity Ct.
Minnetonka, MN 55343
612-938-0005

The COMPUTER PLAY SCORECARD

One of the unique features of our magazine is the patented COMPUTER PLAY Scorecard. In order for you to be able to utilize it fully, we will explain the definitions of the various categories and give details on the final CP RATING.

NAME: This is the specific name found on the game package.

TYPE: We will attempt to specify the category of game being reviewed. Choices include ARCADE, ADVENTURE, TEXT, SIMULATION, TRADITIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, CREATIVITY, STRATEGY, and CARTRIDGE.

FORMATS: The currently available formats will be listed. Normally, we will also note the version of the game that was used for the review.

PUBLISHER: The company which created the game.

DISTRIBUTOR: The company that actually sells the game.

DESIGNERS: The individuals who designed the game.

AGES: The suggested age range for which the game is appropriate.

OF PLAYERS: The number of players who can play at one time.

*****THE RATINGS*****

ABILITY LEVEL: Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced. Our reviewers are instructed to rate this from the viewpoint of the average gamer.

REQUIREMENTS: Specific hardware or memory requirements beyond the minimum computer system for a specific format.

PRICE: The manufacturer's suggested retail price.

PACKAGING: Are the materials slick and colorful? Does the package look professional? Are "bonus" items provided to enhance the game experience?

DOCUMENTATION: Are the instructions clear and understandable? Are all game situations covered? Are all necessary player aids or maps provided?

GRAPHICS/TEXT: Are the screen graphics clean and colorful? Do they add to the game? Do the graphics take full advantage of the machine's capabilities? For text games, was the story exciting and imaginative? This category includes sound and animation.

REALISM: This category is for vehicle simulations, war games, and traditional games (such as chess). Does the game faithfully recreate the "look and feel" of the events being simulated? Are the statistics or historical facts correct? Did the game give you a true experience?

PLAYABILITY: The big one. Did the game hold your interest? Did you play for hours or get bored quickly? Did the game draw you into another world? Would you immediately want to show the game to a friend? Did the game break new ground in design? Did you want to play it again the next day?

Despite the fact that there are five categories in the rating process, you will note that a game will never get a truly good rating without getting a good score for playability.

GAME RATING SUMMARY

NAME	PUBLISHER	RATING	NAME	PUBLISHER	RATING
Dungeon Master	FTL Games	9.65	Kosmic Krieg	Alpha Tec	8.06
Sword of Sodan	Discovery	9.60	Neurobics	Ocean Isle	8.03
Manhunter: New York	Sierra On-Line	9.50	Pete Rose Pennant Fever	Gamestar/Medienagenic	8.00
Solitaire Royale	Spectrum HoloByte	9.50	Zoom!	Discovery	8.00
Red Storm Rising	Microprose	9.50	Breach	Omnitrend	8.00
Legend of BlackSilver	Epyx	9.36	Awesome Arcade Action	Arcadia	7.90
Hybris	Discovery	9.30	Arcade Game Construction Kit	Broderbund	7.90
Superstar Ice Hockey	Mindscape	9.28	Global Commander	DataSoft	7.85
RoboCop	Data East	9.28	Starglider II	Rainbird	7.85
ULTIMA V	Origin Systems	9.25	Accolade	Accolade	7.78
Bard's Tale III	Interplay Products	9.25	Operation Clean Streets	Broderbund	7.75
Balance of Power: 1990	Mindscape	9.24	Platoon	Data East	7.75
Nobunaga's Ambition	Koei	9.15	Virus	Rainbird	7.75
Rocket Ranger	Cinemaware	9.15	Sorcerer Lord	DataSoft	7.75
Space M*A*X 2.1	Final Frontier	9.15	Empire	Interstel	7.74
Where in Europe is Carmen Sandiego?	Broderbund	9.10	Impossible Mission 2	Epyx	7.70
Caveman Ugh-Lympics	Electronic Arts	9.08	Top Gun	Thunder Mountain	7.63
Battlehawks 1942	Lucasfilm	9.04	Ikari Warriors	Data East	7.63
Heroes of the Lance	Strategic Simulation	9.03	Space Racer	Broderbund	7.60
Jack Nicklaus Golf	Accolade	8.98	Solo Flight	Microprose	7.59
The Games: Summer Edition	Epyx	8.93	Sons of Liberty	SSI	7.50
Zak McCracken/Alien Mindbenders	Lucasfilm Games	8.90	John Elway's Quarterback	Melbourne House	7.50
TV Football	Cinemaware	8.90	Gunship	Microprose	7.48
Shufflepuck Cafe	Broderbund	8.90	Zany Golf	Electronic Arts	7.48
Questron II	SSI	8.90	World Class Leader Board Golf	Access	7.40
PHM Pegasus	Lucasfilm Games	8.85	Mars Saga	Electronic Arts	7.40
Flight Simulator 3.0	MicroSoft	8.75	Guardians of Infinity: To Save Kennedy	Paragon	7.40
The Three Stooges	Cinemaware	8.75	Sporting News Baseball	Epyx	7.35
4X4 Off Road Racing	Epyx	8.75	Rebel Charge at Chickamauga	SSI	7.35
GFI Football	Gamestar/Medienagenic	8.72	All Aboard!	Terrific Software	7.31
Battle Chess	Interplay	8.70	Ace of Aces	Accolade	7.26
Transputer	CRL Group	8.66	Karateka	Broderbund	7.25
Jordan vs. Bird: One on One	Electronic Arts	8.64	Rodwars	Arcadia	7.20
Hellcat Ace	Microprose	8.60	Takeover	H.C. Jacoby	7.18
Death Sword	Palace/Epyx	8.60	Romance of the Three Kingdoms	Koei	7.16
Wizardry V: Heart of the Maelstrom	Sir-Tech	8.60	Leatherneck	Microdeal	7.15
Dark Castle	Three-Sixty Pacific	8.58	Bubble Ghost	Accolade	7.13
F-14 Tomcat	Activision	8.56	Rush 'N Attack	Konami	6.98
GBA Basketball	Gamestar/Medienagenic	8.52	Jakal	Konami	6.98
Tetris	Spectrum HoloByte	8.50	Contra	Konami	6.85
The Games: Winter Edition	Epyx	8.50	Off Shore Warrior	Titus	6.80
Police Quest	Sierra On-Line	8.50	A.C.E.	Spinnaker/UXB	6.76
Battlefront System	SSG	8.50	Jimster	Rainbird	6.75
Fire Zone	PSS	8.50	Kid Niki	Data East	6.75
Skate or Die	Electronic Arts	8.48	JET	subLogic	6.58
Tau Ceti	Thunder Mountain	8.45	Final Assault	Epyx	6.50
Space Cutter	Rainbird	8.45	Triple Pack	Access Software	6.50
Thud Ridge	Three-Sixty Pacific	8.41	Hunt for Red October	DataSoft	6.47
Decisive Battles of the Civil War	SSG	8.40	NFL Challenge	XOR	6.40
Shadowgate	Mindscape	8.40	Street Sports Basketball	Epyx	6.40
Super Sunday	Avalon Hill	8.40	Star Wars	Broderbund	6.25
TKO	Accolade	8.38	Pro Challenge	XOR	6.24
Jam Session	Broderbund	8.35	Indiana Jones	Mindscape	6.20
Serve and Volley	Accolade	8.31	Phantasm	CRL Group	5.35
Falcon F-16	Spectrum HoloByte	8.30	Ebonstar	MicroIllusions	5.25
Hyperdome	Exocet Software	8.28	Reel Fish'n	Interstel	4.90
Project Stealth Fighter	Microprose	8.25	Alien Destruction Set	CRL Group	4.55
Metrocross	Epyx	8.25	The Civil War	Avalon Hill	3.45
Rommel	SSG	8.20			
Typhoon of Steel	SSI	8.15			
Wasteland	Electronic Arts	8.15			
Takedown	Gamestar	8.15			
Neuromancer	Interplay	8.15			
Tomahawk	DataSoft	8.11			

VIDEO TITLES

The Legend of Zelda
Double Dragon
RBI Baseball
Contra

Nintendo
Tradewest
Tengen
Konami

9.11
7.98
7.68
7.63

Design Your Own Game

By D. Nathan Richardson

So you got a great idea for a new arcade game but you don't know the first thing about programming. Fear not! Broderbund Software has the answer, with its **Arcade Game Construction Kit**.

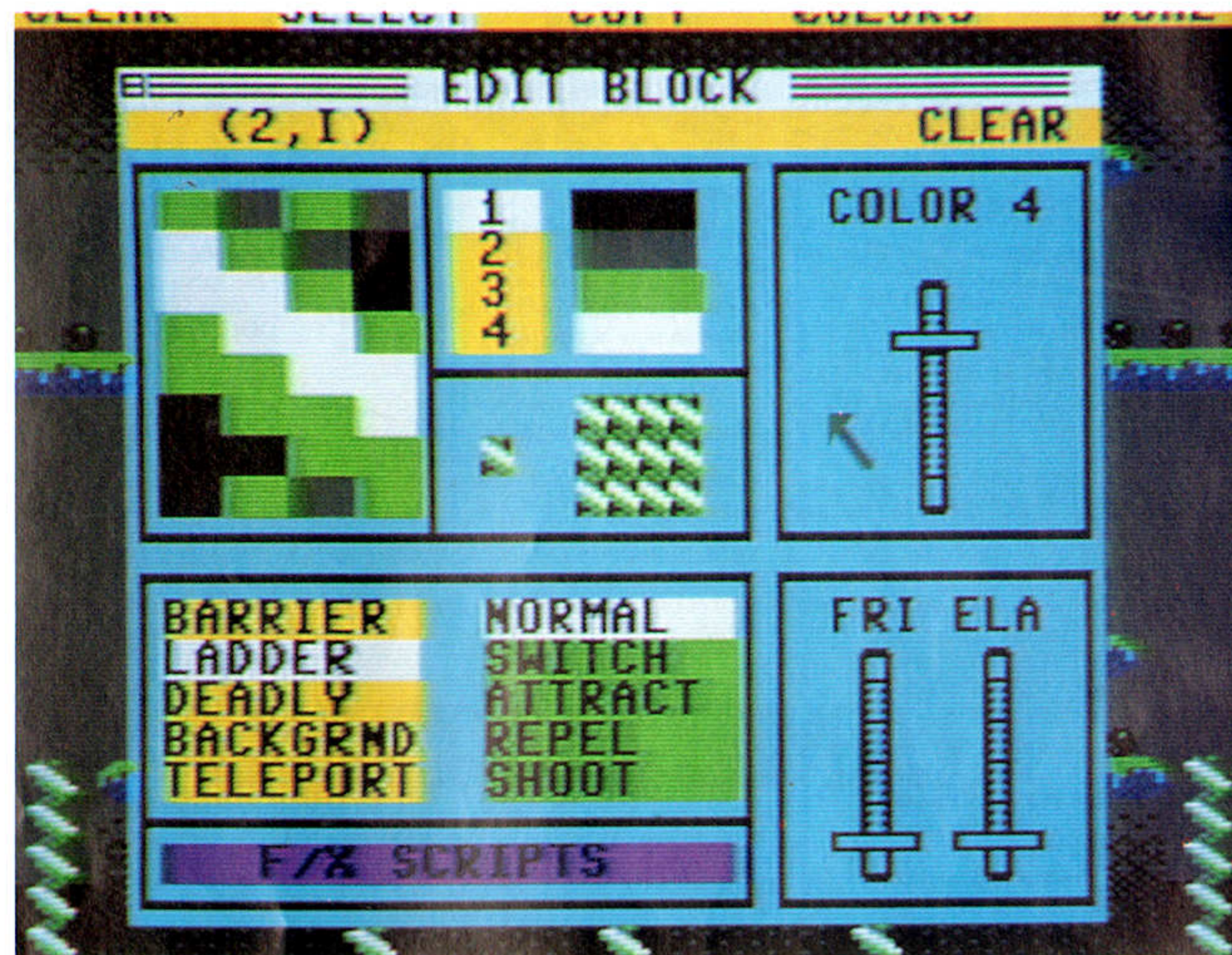
This is a much better program than most of its predecessors like Gamemaker or Adventure Construction Set, because it is easier to use than the former and has better animation than the latter. All of the commands are joystick accessible so you can design a game with relative ease and speed.

Most gamers are aware that there is a big difference between what software firms consider arcade quality and what gamers consider it to be. The reason I bring this up is, when most people pick up a game construction program, they assume that they can make games like Joust or Double Dragon in an hour or so and it will play like the arcade game. Most arcade games use thousands of bytes of memory and high resolution monitors, making almost any personal computer version look like some ugly step sister. So don't say I didn't warn you. Now if you can console yourself to this reality, you will find this program has a lot of excellent qualities despite the limitations of home computers.

To get you started, the program comes with six pre-made games and a tutorial game to walk you through the basics. Each one of the games is designed to show different effects the program can create. One of the games, Kangarang, consists of multiple levels on one screen to show the effect of gravity. Another game, such as Isle Quest, was designed to show how objects on the screen can affect movement in a game without gravity. The other games are different variations on those two themes. Any one of these games can be worked on and changed to suit your personal tastes. You can use the five levels they give you and expand them to fifty. Or you can change it around so you can't recognize it from what it started as.

Like most construction programs, Arcade Game Construction Kit has its own jargon and terms to get used to. The program is divided into several parts that cover the different aspects to make a game. You can animate the characters in the actor's section to make them more lively. Remember the less actors you have on the screen at one time will make the characters move faster. The more characters you have, the slower they all move.

One of the first sections you will get to when you design your own game is the Environment Editor. The Environment Editor allows you to set the tone of the game, such as gravity or how the joystick will work. You can even play with the borders of the screen so you can walk off the edge to enter the next level. Inertia can also be adjusted on this menu to affect the speed of play. This section also gives you a menu for



miscellaneous things, like extra lives or how the actors affect certain scenery blocks.

The next section is the Actor Editor. There are several different types of actors in this program and each one has a special function. They are player actors, drone actors, missiles, sentry actors and computer actors. A player actor is the character the game player would control. Drone actors only move in one direction. Missiles are anything that you can shoot. Sentry actors are stuck in a pattern, whereas computer actors can think and follow you. It's in this menu that you can do all the animation of the characters for the game that you are making.

A lot of the little things that can happen to you in a game are also handled in this section. Like what happens when a character bumps into something or is killed. Some of the actors in this game can mutate from one character to another for a special effect.

After you have created all of the characters for your game, you will need some sound effects to add pizzazz to the action. I mean, what's the sense of shooting something if it doesn't squeal when you kill it. You are given four different pitches to work with, each with its own unique sound. They are the square wave, triangle wave, sawtooth wave and white noise.

The last section is called the Level Editor. In this section, you work on the scenery blocks and special effects. Like making doors open or special ways to kill something. This menu is an overview of the game that you are making. So you can jump into any part of the game to clean up or change anything you don't like. You can add or delete characters at this time if you find

that something is wrong. All of the final touches are taken care of in this section also, like how missile fire is handled or rewards and punishments for doing certain things.

In the documentation, they give you lots of tips on how to fine tune the games that you design. Another thing I should say is, although the program allows you to have up to six players per game, you can only have one player playing the game at any given time.

All together, I think this is the ideal program for anyone who has any imagination and is tired of shelling out good money on what somebody else thinks is a good game.

Best of all, when you design that great game you have always wanted, you can give it to your friends to play, and they don't even need the program to enjoy it.

Name: ARCADE GAME CONSTRUCTION KIT
Type: Arcade
Formats: C64/128
Publisher: Broderbund
Designer: Mike Livesay
Ages: 10 and above
Requirements: Joystick
Players: One
Price: \$29.95

Difficulty: Intermediate
Packaging: Good (7)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics/Text: Good (8)
Playability: Good (8)

CP RATING: 7.90
Circle Reader Service Number 22.

◀ 48

American Sammy, in June, we'll see the Japanese number one hit, Ninja Taro, a maze game in which you must fight your way to the exit of each room. And toward the end of the year, Thundercase, a motorcycle shoot-em-up featuring sidecar weapons that you can obtain and add as you go. Get a bunch of sidecars with special weapons to become more and more powerful.

FCI expects to be shipping Ultima III by now, and hint books will be available soon. In addition, they expect to ship Hydlide by May or June. People who want MagMax posters can still send \$2 to FCI at 150 E. 52nd Street, 34th Floor, New York, NY 10022.

Hal America expects to be shipping Adventures of Lolo by now. Lolo means crazy in Hawaiian, but other than that the game

sounds like fun. Lolo is a prince whose princess has been kidnapped by a great devil. In his quest to save her, he must travel through a 50 room maze, learn to handle and control a variety of monsters and demons, figure out the proper sequence of actions to unlock each room and gain its treasure, and so forth. I was told that this game is very popular with young teenage players, and the young ladies find Lolo very cute. Look our Spuds McKenzie!

By June/July, Hal America expects to ship Rollerball, a four-screen scrolling pinball game that lets you play up to four players in rotation or two players in a head-to-head game. This game is truly unusual as you watch the screen scroll as the ball moves from one part of the game to another. There is a feeling of playing on a full-sized pinball game, something that can't

be approximated on a single screen.

One of the new licensees, who doesn't have a title to announce yet, is nevertheless interesting. American Technos is worth watching if only based on their previous success--the coin-op hit, Double Dragon.

Speaking of interesting companies, CSG is a huge Japanese company started by Sony Japan and CBS Japan. The initials stand for CBS Sony Group. Their first titles will be Super Dodge Ball, Super Sushi Pinball and Super Rescue. They plan to sponsor a Super Dodge Ball contest in several cities in September with a final competition in Seattle for the winners of the regional matches. Among the prizes will be various My First Sony items.

That's it for another month. See you next time.

Blades of Steel

By Rusel DeMaria

I've never played ice hockey. In fact, I haven't even watched all that much of it. I have a hockey stick - it was a give-a-way at a computer show - but I've never used it. So, it always comes as a surprise how much I like ice hockey games on computers and video game machines. I really like Mindscapes Superstar Ice Hockey on the PC, and I really like Blades of Steel, Konami's recent release on the NES.

Blades of Steel features one-or two-player action. In the one-player mode, you can pick a team and a difficulty level (beginner, intermediate, or advanced) and a team to represent. In exhibition games, you can also pick your opponent, but in tournament play the matchups are chosen for you.

In two-player mode, you face-off against a friend and go for it.

The game always begins with a face-off, then, if you get the puck, you try to skate your way down to the opposing goal. Personal

heroics can be effective; you can often skate down toward the goal, make a few moves, fake a shot or two, maybe, and finally slap one in. However, this game is best when you learn to pass. Your teammates are pretty good at controlling any passes, and can even (sometimes) make aggressive moves of their own. However, when you pass the puck, you then control the receiving player, so most of the action is still in your hands.

At the higher levels of play, you need to use passing, fakes, and other strategy to outwit the goalie. On the other side of the rink, when you play defense, you have to control one of the defenders, but when a shot is taken, you also control the goalie. One of the hardest parts of the game is that quick switch from defender to goalie as the opponent slaps a shot in. You have to adjust fast, but you soon get the knack.

Hockey is a rough sport, and hockey players are not always very sportsmanlike. In fact, hard checking and slashing are common moves, and you can get away with some wild moves. You

can get thrown in the penalty box for illegal play, or give up a free shot, but more often than not, you'll simply get into a fight with an opposing player. This is pretty amusing.

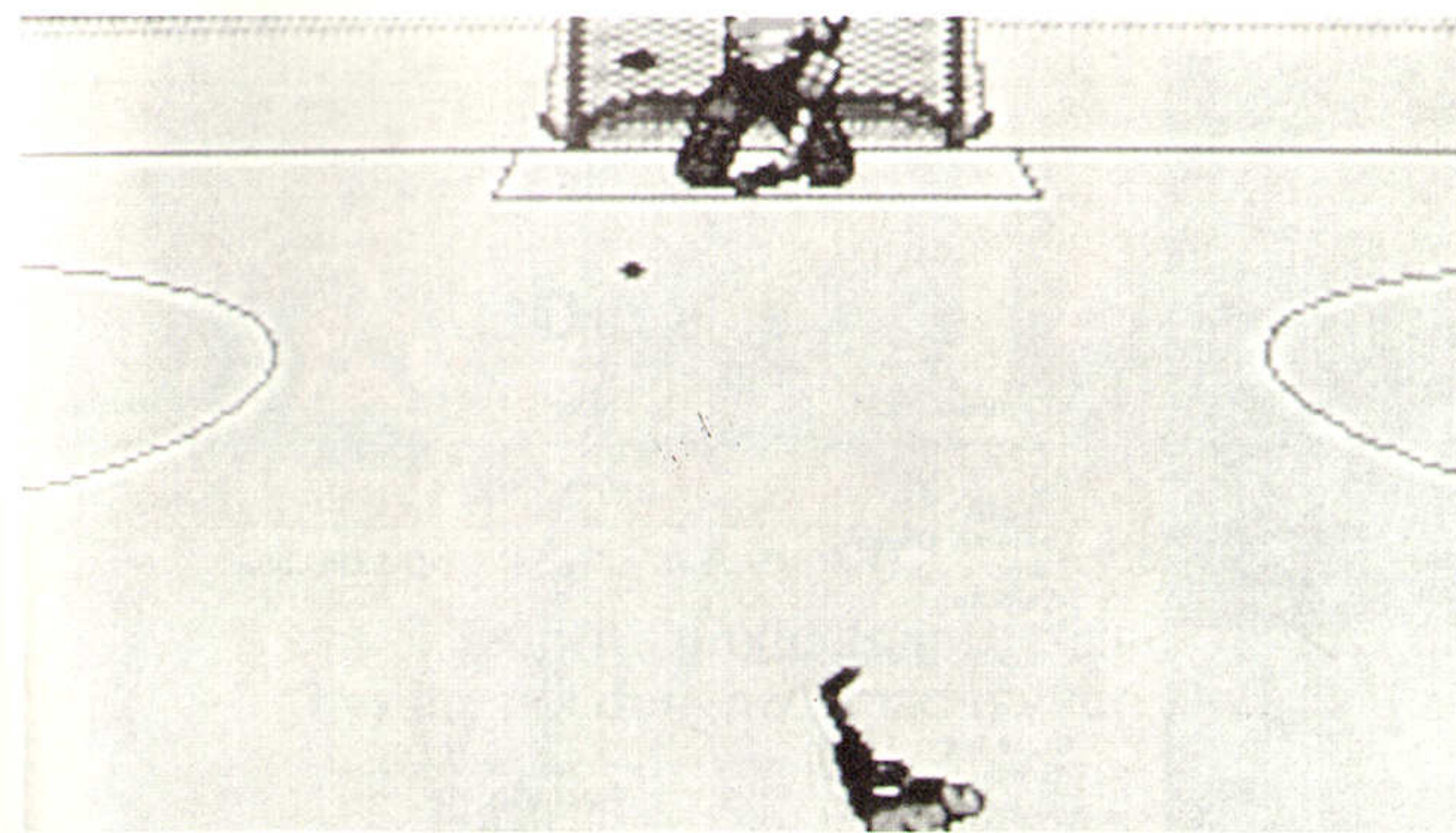
The screen changes to a closeup of you and the other player duking it out. You can punch or defend high or low. In this mini boxing match, the winner usually gets the puck. The loser goes to the penalty box - further emphasizing the hockey credo that the strong prosper.

The animation, game play, and challenge of Blades of Steel are all excellent. The two-player game is fun and challenging, and, overall, this is an eminently satisfying game. For sheer action, uninhibited brawling, and yet subtle strategic play, this game is as good as it gets. It's a game you probably won't tire of quickly. At the higher levels of play, the computer opponent can provide plenty of challenges, and you'll probably have no problem finding friends who want to try their hand. For the ultimate challenge, try playing (and winning) a tournament in advanced mode.

Name: BLADES OF STEEL
Type: Sports Simulation
Format: NES
Publisher: Konami
Ages: 10 and above
Requirements: NES
Players: One or Two
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level: Beginner-Intermediate
Packaging: Good (8.5)
Documentation: Good (8.5)
Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.2)
Playability: Excellent (9.5)

CP RATING: 9.2
Circle Reader Service Number 50.



Coming Attractions

Computer Play Magazine, will be reviewing DEJA VUE II: LOST IN LAS VEGAS in May. A brand new adventure game distributed by Mindscape, Inc. Deja Vue II is the new adventure of Ace Harding, caught in the jaws of trouble again, amidst the glitz of Las Vegas, gambling tables and noise of money, high crime and deep mystery!! Also in May, by Spinnaker, is SARGON IV, a highly sophisticated chess simulator. It covers a lot of new ground in manipulative abilities, as well as set design. Both games will be reviewd on the Macintosh.

Also in the lineup are the following: VULCAN, bu CRL, a company based in England. DESERT RATS, ANCIENT BATTLES, and INTERNATIONAL SOCCER, also by CRL. You will see reviews on a wide variety of games including: ZYNAPS, by Hewson, BLACK SHADOW, MANDROID FILES, by CRL. VAMPIRES EMPIRE by Digitek, MACARTHUR by SSG, THE TRAIN and GRAND PRIX CIR. both by Accolade, POWERPLAY HOCKEY, by Electronic Arts, and



TECHNO COP by Epyx. SCAVENGERS by Interstel will also be reviewed. SPACE STATION SIMULATOR, and FOUNDATIONS WASTE, both by CRL, who promises to be a large supplier of interesting software from England in the near future. Keep on the look out in future issues for new releases just recently previewed at the Consumer Electronics Show.



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